

SOME LEGENDARY
LANDMARKS OF AFRICA



MRS. FRANK EVANS

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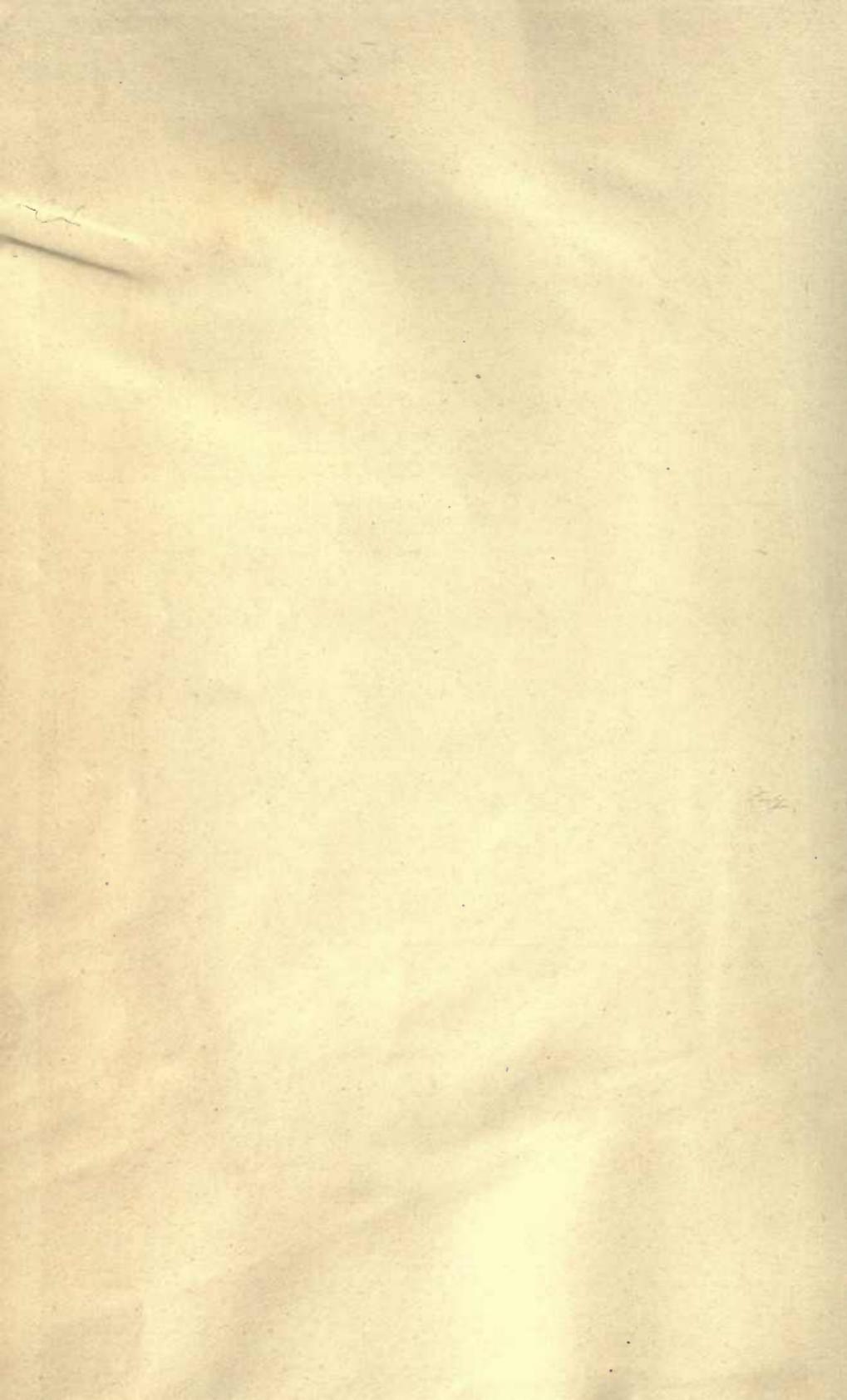
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OF AFRICA

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BY

MRS. FRANK EVANS



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To My Husband.

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P R E F A C E .

THE attention of the many is just now fixed upon the development and future of Africa.

To a few it is interesting to trace through past ages the characteristics and traditions of native tribes.

One so interested cannot but note how small an impress is left upon the native by contact with Asiatic or European races.

Pondos, Kaffirs, Zulus, even Hottentots, cling to the beliefs and superstitions to-day they held in the time of James I. of England, of John I. of Portugal, of Solomon of Jerusalem.

Such reflections suggest the gratitude one feels to those dauntless explorers who have given the world true pictures of the past.

To them, and to two or three friends I had the fortune to meet in South Africa, I am indebted.

More than all, to the peculiar natural and romantic beauty of the country I owe a pleasure and resource that is shared by many others.

MRS. FRANK EVANS.

CONTENTS.

A STAR-MESSAGE.

Suggested by some legends of South-East Africa, and some beliefs connected with the supposed kingdom of the Queen of Sheba in that country.

CHRISTUS.

Founded on some incidents during the Portuguese crusades against the Mahomedans of South Africa, and on some Hottentot legends.

UTIKA.

An imaginary romance suggesting the origin and finding of the first great yellow diamond in South Africa. Before the advent of Europeans the journey from all the wide district north of the Orange river to the foot of Table Mountain was frequently made by native chiefs.

DIA DE NATAL.

Vasco de Gama discovered this beautiful country on Christmas Day, and himself gave to it its beautiful name.

A STAR-MESSAGE.

Suggested by some legends of South-East Africa, and some beliefs connected with the supposed kingdom of the Queen of Sheba in that country.

I.

IN a far-away land that is now a ruinous desolation there lived once a powerful and prosperous people.

They claimed descent from sons of gods.

They recognised as god of major power the sun ; of minor power the moon.

Also they held a reverent belief in the agency of stars as heavenly messengers.

But a Star-Message could only be transmitted through a mortal who had grown pure in the self-surrender of supreme love, or supreme suffering.

This is the history of one whom Nature loved too well, whom men loved not enough, whom a power greater than men or Nature protected, who received a star-message.

* * * *

Zim found her in a great gourd-field.

One might easily trip and fall in a gourd-field. The coarse succulent vine flings itself over stone and bush, bridges over hollows, clambers up and down the

undulating ground with vigorous intrepidity. Everywhere there are gourds, big and yellow, small and green, for the summer is waning and it is the perfect time of gourds.

The children playing in the gourd-field said a great bird brought her. They said :

“ We heard a rushing noise, a great bird flew over our heads making a shadow, he dropped a child among the gourds. We know because we heard the child cry.”

Zim took the child in his huge arms. It was a little, sun-browned thing, with great eyes and masses of tangled glossy curls. It was wrapped in an ample skirt of gaudy cotton cloth, with rough-cut coral beads around its bare neck. In its tiny fist it clutched in rigid grasp a conch-shell.

Zim is very big, very ugly, very lazy, with one leg shorter than the other. It was a time-worn wonder in the tribe where his wife found him. She kept him because among her people it was ignominy to be husbandless.

Zim took the child home, fed it with sour milk, and tried to question it, but it replied in words they could not understand.

The wife said :

“ See it holds a shell. I will take the shell.” And she tried, but in an access of passion the child struggled, sprang clear of the woman, lifted up her voice and sang.

Sang tempestuously—stamping its little bare feet upon the red ground.

Sang pathetically—crossing its thin brown arms in mute appeal; sang despairingly—throwing itself prone upon the earth.

The woman was amazed, but Zim said :

“ Let the child bide.”

The woman said :

“ Why, it is another to feed, we, who have so many mouths—send it away.”

Zim said :

“ She shall remain. She shall be nourished with cow’s milk.”

Now the women of that country might not touch the cattle, so Zim was master, and the child Horas found a home, and no one dared touch her shell.

II.

ON the high level of a small plateau, up and up above the sea, with mountains and mountains, an eternity of mountains towering away to the north, and between the mountains, sweet green valleys.

In the valleys are sun-bright fields of millet and gourds; cool shelter of the taxus trees, thickets and thickets of South Sea roses, and reaches of swift-running water.

Here is Horas' new home. The woman she calls mother loves her not because she is not kin.

The children love her not because she is alien and strange. So day after day the child wanders alone on the hillsides or in the woodlands.

Every morning when the children get their milk and bread the last is left for Horas, and she with hatred in her eyes and in her heart, takes it grudgingly, and turns away to hide herself in the thickness of the forest.

But when the chief of the tribe returns from a long hunt, he sends for Horas.

Zim takes her to the door of the chief's house under the great taxus trees, and there she sings her two songs.

First, the song the shell has taught her. A plaintive song, full of longing, with a tender heart-worn cadence. A song of home. But to Horas it is as yet vaguely real, because she knows no past.

Next, the song the swallow has taught her. To this her heart yields rapturously. A song of liberty, of action, of love. A song of visionary lands, where homes are beloved and secure; where men are tender and strong; where maidens are adored as they are fair.

Then the girl lifts her voice and calls to the swallow:

“Take me, O take me, swallow!”

But the chief is angry. He says :

“ Cease girl, thou hast an ungrateful heart. Go away to thy bed, and sing no more thy swallow song.”

So Horas moves away in the darkness, the chief’s bitter words in her ears, Zim’s bitter blows about her neck, her own bitter thoughts at her heart.

Not to bed. Far up the mountain side is the shelter of a great rock; there, wrapped in her tattered sheepskin, she throws herself upon the warm red earth and makes her moan. Her poor little heart is heavy with longing and pride and hatred.

She cries out :

“ I would I were great and strong, and I would kill them !”

No one hears her, no one comforts her ; but the stars shine down from heaven, and the wind lulls her, and presently she is soothed and sleeps in that everlasting maternal embrace that Nature never denies her favourites.

One night Horas lay against the rock and watched the stars.

As the night advanced, they became more brilliant.

One, brighter than all, shot a long narrow ray of light earthwards. It made a white spot on the dark rock.

Sleeps she, or wakes she, little Horas ?

Down, down the lustrous star-path comes a beautiful form and stops beside her. He places upon the

white spot of the rock an instrument of ten strings and plays upon it. About his head is a nimbus of light. When he ceases playing, his voice is to Horas sweeter than the music of the ten strings.

He says :

“ Little child, little child, praise thou the Lord.”

Horas cannot speak or move for the awe and joy that holds her. Then he is gone, receding as he had advanced along the star-made path.

Horas springs up, reaches out her arms beseechingly. She cries :

“ Do not go—do not leave me. How shall I know to praise ? ”

Back from the bright path comes a dazzling transient flash. The vision is gone, but glistening on the dark earth at her feet is a clear sparkling crystal.

Horas puts it in her bosom with a sigh of disappointment. She cries :

“ How shall I know ? ” Yet in her heart of hearts she is comforted with a vague but abiding sense of gain.

III.

THE gourds are all gathered now. The straggling vine is sere and leafless, but in the reaches by the riverside the South Sea roses* are putting on their glossy

* Oleanders.

green, and soon their great soft buds will be bursting into gorgeous bloom.

The South Sea roses and the gourds have succeeded one another many times since first Zim found the little brown baby Horas among the gourds.

Zim's wife loves her no better now than she did then.

When Horas hears the children calling to each other "Mtakama" (child of my mother), her heart aches with a cruel hurt of loneliness. She thrusts herself within the close thicket of the South Sea roses and wanders aimlessly, the misery at her heart growing, growing.

Once wandering so, she comes late to the home of her foster mother. It is dark. The woman says:

"Lazy girl; wilt thou for ever eat our bread and labour not?"

Horas says:

"Nay, I will eat of thy bread no longer."

Zim from the darkness calls out:

"Let be, wife; let the maid bide."

But the wife is angry, for she labours early and late, and Zim is idle, and there are many mouths. She cries out:

"She shall not bide—a greedy, lazy vagabond!"

The woman seizes a burning brand from the fire and hurls it at the girl.

Horas springs aside, and the brand catches Zim as he lies under the trees.

With a yell of rage and pain he rushes at the woman—but Horas is quicker.

The woman lies upon the ground, the firelight showing a bleeding mark upon her cheek—the mark of a shell.

“Horas, Horas, thou wilt die for this! Quick, quick! we must fly!”

Zim seizes her hand, and together they plunge unto the darkness.

The water of the little river at the bottom of the valley is cold at midnight, but they two, fevered with passion, heed it not. With the superstition of his race, Zim grasps his imifize, the charm against the power of river spirits; but Horas’ only thought is hate, hate, hate!

Up the mountain side the uneven ground dips here and there into wider hollows, and higher yet the rocks stand out bare, black, square.

At last, at a sharp angle of overhanging crag, they stop and throw themselves beneath its shelter.

The stars are shining now. Horas feels for the crystal and draws it forth, but it is dull and lustreless in the starlight. She replaces it in her bosom and a hard, cold stupor settles on her heart.

The knowledge of evil, or the knowledge of good, is not either a revelation?

Zim says :

" Horas, we can never return, we are outcast. I have kept thee these many moons, now thou shalt labour for me. I have a plan."

Horas says :

" What is thy plan ? "

Zim says :

" We will journey northwards—there are many villages northwards. At the villages thou shalt sing and I will beg ; but thou must be disguised or perhaps I should not be able to protect thee."

Horas looked at him. Ugh ! he was so ugly, so revolting, with a cunning sinister look in his small eyes. The cold hard stupor settles down upon her heart. Then they arise, and walk on and on in the darkness.

Next day at sunset they approach a village.

Zim puts Horas into the leafy thickness of a tree and covers her with his eland skin ; then he goes into the village and calls out :

" Sing, my bird ! "

Horas sings from under the eland skin in the tree.

When she ceases Zim cries :

" Who will give me food ? a little milk and bread for my bird, and meat for me ? "

He has no lack, for the people are fain to hear the bird sing again.

When it is quite dark Zim returns to the tree, and

gives to Horas the milk and bread. Then they resume their weary journey, finding shelter from the heat of the sun, and rest as best they can.

IV.

WHEN the South Sea roses were ablaze with bloom, and thousands of the gorgeous petals shed, and the gourd-fields cool and fresh in the tender green of their young leaves, and the sun pitilessly hot, Horas made herself a hood of plaited reeds to be cooler than the eland skin.

One day she said :

“ Shall we go on for ever, Zim ? May we not bide a while ? ”

Zim said :

“ How shall I get food if we abide ? I should have to work. No, it is better to journey on.”

One dark evening, plodding through the forest, they came upon a lonely, dark house.

Zim said :

“ It is deserted ; someone has died there.” And he clutched at his charms.

Horas laughed. She said :

“ I fear not the dead. I will go in and rest awhile till thou go and return again.”

But the house was not deserted. There was a woman within, and a dim light.

Horas said :

“ Art thou living or dead ? ”

The woman said :

“ I am alive. I am a forsaken wife and childless.
I live here alone and hide my misery.”

Horas said :

“ I, too, am alone and forsaken.”

Then the woman held out her arms in the dim light, and Horas crept within the embrace, and they wept together.

Horas told all her life’s tale.

She said :

“ What shall I do ? How shall I see my crystal clear once more ? ”

The woman said :

“ To suffer—to suffer willingly. Wilt thou choose to suffer for those thou dost not love ? ”

Horas wept. She drew forth the crystal, and in the dim light it sparkled. She said :

“ Yes, I will choose to suffer.”

The childless woman said :

“ We will offer ourselves for slaves. There is a man at the great river who will give beads and copper and gold for slaves. We will sell ourselves, and Zim shall have the price and return and find favour again with his tribe. We will sell ourselves to Ali Zahr, the slave dealer.”

Zim returned and they told him.

Zim said :

" It is true there is a slave dealer at the river ; I have heard it in the village. He will take you a long, long journey, and sell you again to the great Queen at Fura."*

Horas said :

" We will go."

Zim said :

" I have heard there are thousands and thousands at Fura. When thou art come to the great Queen, Horas, thou wilt rejoice that I found thee in the gourd-field and brought thee hither."

Horas laughed. She said :

" Thou hast beads now instead of a bird to buy thee meat."

So Zim and Horas parted and saw one another no more.

* * * *

Ali Zahr was a cruel man.

Horas suffered hunger and thirst, taunts and stripes. At times came the hard, cold stupor at her heart, and the crystal was dull. Then the woman who was not her mother, yet suffered voluntarily with her, wept with her and said :

" Look for me, dear."

And because there was nothing but love—love for one another in their two hearts, Horas looked again

* The palace of the Queen of Sheba.

and through tears saw clear brightness, and within the brightness children's faces.

The childless woman said :

" Even so I see children's faces when I dream. Perhaps there will be children for me in the 'New Life.' "

v.

FAR away to the north of the gourd-fields and the South Sea roses is the palace Fura.

Its walls cover the western slope of a great mountain. At the mountain's base is the broad valley of a broad river.

Corn and rice stand thick in the fields. Sheep and cattle in the river meadows.

Adars* are so dense their blue berries are like rock faces on the hill sides. The perfume of the adars is heavy on the air.

The great hall of Fura is dazzling with white of polished wood and stone, with splendour of gold and gems. At one end is the throne of virgin beaten gold. The throne of the great Queen Balkis.†

Around the throne are ever a band of white-clad maidens; sometimes who scatter roses; sometimes who shake perfume; sometimes who make music. For Balkis is right royal, and there are thousands who live but to do her pleasure.

* A species of Juniper.

† The Queen of Sheba.

Upon the marvellous hand-wrought cloths of Asshur lies Balkis.

One who is near speaks softly, and says :

“ Will Balkis the Queen listen ? Behold, there is the slave-seller, Ali Zahr, returned from the forests of the south. Will the Queen listen ? ”

Balkis says :

“ Why should I listen ? ”

The one who is near says :

“ Will Balkis the Queen listen ? Ali Zahr has brought a maiden from out the forests of the south, and she can sing to please the gods.”

Balkis says :

“ Bid them approach.”

So Ali Zahr drew nigh, and with him Horas.

Horas chained with iron bands between the woman who was not her mother, and another.

The two women dropped upon their knees when they were brought before Balkis, but Horas stood upright, her wrists held down, the wavy masses of her hair tossed back, her eyes defiant. Ali Zahr took her roughly by the bare shoulder. He said :

“ Sing.”

Horas said :

“ Loose me,” but flinched not.

The woman who was not her mother looked up with weary, pleading eyes. She whispered :

“ Child of my desolation ! ”

Then Horas sang—sang the old song of her shell
Standing there bound, travel-worn, helpless, with
bruised feet and hanging hands. Sang of a peace and
happiness she had never known.

The Queen said :

“ Loose the maid. Give Ali Zahr his price and
send him away.” And it was done.

Balkis said :

“ Wilt sing again, maiden ? ”

Horas sang ; sang the swallow’s song, and forgot
her pain, reached out her fetter-free arms and lost
herself in the joy of the swallow’s pictured land.

And as she sang many pressed within the great
stone hall to listen.

And as she sang the light of the evening sun
made a path of light from a far doorway.

And as she sang there came within the far door-
way one, holding in his hands an instrument of ten
strings.

And as she sang she moved herself a little to the
eager burden of the song, when suddenly her eyes
caught sight of the form in the far doorway, standing
within the path of light.

The song ceased. When they bade Horas continue
she heeded not.

When they said, “ What is it ? ” she said :

“ The instrument of ten strings.”

Balkis said :

“Take the girl away to the house of my maidens.
Let her be refreshed and clothed anew.”

So the officers of the palace of Fura led forth the three slaves, out of the great stone hall into the greater courtyard beyond. There, one took the childless woman somewhat roughly, to separate her from Horas.

A dangerous light flashed in the girl's eyes. She drew the woman who was not her mother closer to herself. But the man laughed aloud and caught at the woman by her hair.

Horas sprang at him and struck out at his face. There was something in her hand. The blow she dealt was powerful.

He fell to the ground, and on his brow was a bleeding mark—the mark of a shell.

Horas stood defiant, the woman who was not her mother gathered to her breast. She cried :

“No one shall take from me my one mother!”

So a great tumult arose. Many ran from the great hall and from other parts of the palace, and they cried :

“The slave girl has killed the Queen's officer!”

Some ran to tell Balkis, but no one touched Horas.

Then the childless woman spoke gently. She said :

“Horas, dear child of my desolation, do not contend. Even the meanest, the most despised, shall

attain joy at last. In the ‘New Life’ I shall watch over thee, and in trouble I will be always near thee.”

Then the poor childless woman sank down upon the ground, and her spirit fled away, for she had endured all her lot of suffering.

VI.

HORAS sat upon a great hewn stone in the garden of Fura.

Was it the little Horas, who once lay hidden in a gourd-field of the south, whom Zim carried in his arms ?

Now it is a woman grown, queenly maiden. They had clothed her with a fine, embroidered robe, and combed her glossy hair, binding its weight back from her wide brow with fillets of gold.

If she had borne the grief of loneliness before, it had been in the freedom of the virgin forest, or in the responsive sympathy of one devoted companion. Now she tasted the full bitterness of gilded captivity.

In the numerous throng about the throne of Balkis the maiden knew herself more than ever friendless and forsaken.

Horas sat upon a great hewn stone in the garden of Fura.

One drew nigh ; he held in his hand an instrument of ten strings. He said :

" Horas, art thou alien ? I, too, am alien—I, too, a stranger and sojourner."

Horas said :

" Hast thou then no home, no country, no kindred ?"

Jubal said :

" Yea, all three, but far from Fura. Nevertheless, I shall one day return, for my God is merciful."

Horas said :

" There is no God. The earth and the heavens are made for Kings and their Might. Does the Sun hear the groaning of the bondmen ? Does the Moon listen to the cry of the oppressed ? Who dare promise there is a ' New Life,' even for such patient souls as my one mother ? "

Jubal said :

" There is one Lord, Maker of heaven and earth—Maker of thee, O most beautiful Horas."

The maiden gazed at him.

Jubal played upon the instrument of ten strings, and sang softly a song—a song of the great poet of his land—the burden oft recurring : " Praise thou the Lord ; " the promise : " Who saveth thy life from destruction."

Softly the maid drew towards the musician.

The sinking sun dropped into the river far below them. The sky became warm red, gold, grey.

The song ended. The sheltering mantle of summer darkness fell around them.

The ineffable solace of purest sympathy enfolded them.

Hand to hand, heart to heart, soul to soul, under the shadow of the One Almighty.

Horas, the self-sold slave.

Jubal, the willing fugitive.

VII.

THROUGH the sweet summer, day after day, the two exiles sought one another.

Jubal told Horas of his far-off land, and his telling seemed to her sweeter than the swallow's song.

He told her of a great king whose wisdom and wealth dominated the world ; of valiant men, of fair maidens, of sweet singers, and of the one great God, by whose blessing all power and glory and happiness was secured.

Horas told Jubal of the gourd-fields, and the South Sea roses, and the shell ; last of all of the precious crystal.

One day she showed it to him. He said :

"They search day by day in the earth here for less than this. Canst thou see aught in it, Horas ? "

And Horas, gazing steadfastly, longing with fervent soul to perceive something familiar in her lover's eyes, said :

"I see chariots of gold, and therein young men with flowing, gold-powdered locks ; and one, most radiant of them all, in the midst, whose face is calm with power."

Jubal said :

"It is the Lord's anointed."

* * * * *

Now there were some who went before the Queen Balkis, and said :

"Will the Queen listen ? Behold, there are two, the musician Jubal, and Horas the slave, and they are ever whispering together."

So Balkis sent for Jubal, and said :

"Jubal, what do'st thou here at Fura ?"

Jubal said :

"Would to God, O Queen, I might depart ! Lo, the ships of Hiram, my master, yet tarry at the sea-shore."

Balkis said :

"Thou hast my leave to go, Jubal." Yet she smiled, for she knew he would not take his leave.

He said :

"O Queen, I thank thee ! yet, O Queen, I would fain take a gift from thee to my own land. May I have leave to ask, O Queen ?"

Balkis said :

“ What wilt thou, Jubal ? ”

He said :

“ The maiden Horas to be my wife.”

Balkis laughed. She said :

“ Not so, I should indeed appear witless. Nay, thou shalt remain at Fura yet a space, and tell me further of thy king, and of his wisdom.”

Jubal said :

“ Wilt thou indeed listen, O Queen ? Behold, Horas has a star-stone, in the which she can see much that is both marvellous and true ; ask *her* of my king.”

Then Horas was brought into the great stone hall by the Queen’s command, and stood before the golden throne of Balkis.

Balkis said :

“ Listen, slave. The Queen of Heaven deigns sometimes to send to mortals a star-message ; I am told thou hast received such—is this true ? Speak, as the gods give thee grace.”

Horas lifted her eyes and sought the eager eyes of her lover, then drew from her bosom the precious crystal given her so long ago, and proffered it to the Queen.

Balkis said :

“ Nay, it is not for me ; look thou, and tell the message.”

Horas moved a little and sought, unabashed by

fear or shame, the hand of her lover, before she bent her earnest gaze upon the stone. And as she gazed, softly the great stone hall filled with people. And as she gazed, the warm still sunlight, through a far doorway, fell upon the white stone, and whiter wood ; the golden throne ; the bending form of the gazing maid.

And as she gazed, the perfume of a thousand spices burdened the air, so still—so still.

Then the gazing maid, the alien slave maid, lifted her voice and sang :

“ I see a great throne of ivory and gold and precious stones, and thereon the Lord’s anointed. There is none so great, for his God hath exalted him ; there is none so wise, for the Almighty has gifted him with wisdom beyond all mortals. All the kings of the earth delight to honour him. All his joy is in the Lord, his God.”

She ceased, and again there was a great quiet, and the sunlight faded and faded.

The Queen spoke. She said :

“ It is enough. I may not doubt this star-message. Horas, Jubal, ye are free. Take the maid to thy wife, Jubal—no slave, but free—and return to thine own country—to thine own great king, to thy greater God. And thou, Horas, draw nigh.”

So Horas drew nigh and knelt before the feet of the Queen.

Balkis said :

“ Because thou hast received and guarded this star-message, thou art blessed of our gods. Twice blessed, for doubtless the great God of thy husband shall bless thee. The heart is purified by love or suffering. Verily thou art found worthy. Go in peace.”

Then Balkis rose up and taking the hand of Horas lifted her up, and set a kiss upon her brow, and put her willing hand into the hand of Jubal her lover; and they two went out into the summer darkness together.

VIII.

THE hot sun smote upon the many walls and round towers of Fura when Jubal and Horas quitted its precincts.

Their way lay down the eastern slope of the mountain to where the ships were loading at the sea-coast—loading with wood and gold and spice; bound for the long journey northwards.

The lovers went not empty-handed. Balkis had sent forward for them great boxes of sweet wood filled with rich raiment, gold and precious stones.

Horas wore upon her neck a finely-wrought chain of gold, wherein were cunningly fixed both green and amber gems, and from the centre hung the matchless clear crystal—the Star-Message.

Ah—but the maid had found that which is yet more precious.

Neither the gold of Ophir, nor sapphires, nor crystal, nor pearls, nor rubies can equal it. Neither the topaz of Ethiopia.

CHRISTUS.

Founded on some incidents during the Portuguese crusades against the Mahomedans of South Africa, and on some Hottentot legends.

THREE hundred years ago three ships sailed away from a Christian port with a cross at the helm.

He who commanded was a Christian knight, eager for the triumph of his God-power—Christus ; eager to subdue a foreign God-power—Allah.

The land he sought was an unknown land to him, and an alien land to the worshippers of Allah.

With fervent zeal and loyal heart he called daily upon his God :

“ Christus ! Christus ! ”

Yet it served his God that he lost his life and failed in his endeavour.

Years after, three ships sailed again southward from peninsula to peninsula ; and after that, again once more three ships from peninsula to peninsula this time northwards, back from the land of Tikquoa* and Allah, back to the land of Christus.

* * * * *

Far, far away, at a point where the waters of two

* God of the Hottentots.

southern seas are united, there is a bay of exceeding beauty. Its opening is to the south. Its western shore is a peninsula, whose lofty mountain heights are covered with blooming trees and flowers all the year. Whose plains are for ever fair with verdure and soft shadows. A land best beloved of all gods. Three lovers have wooed her for centuries with passionate, everlasting idolatry. The sun, the south wind, the sea. Enriched, environed by such love, this land owns a radiant perfection, unrivalled as it is unfamed. If at times some jealous conflicts mar the harmony of the wooing, yet is this mistress not dismayed, for she is Nature's own child, and but loves the sun the better that he is sometimes sullen, sometimes fierce; or the wind, or the sea, that after days and nights of tempestuous combat each comes sobbing up about her feet with wistful supplication.

In the long ago days, when this land was peopled by her native children—Korannas and Bosjesmans*—there lived in a luxuriant valley a tribe whose hereditary chief was young and ambitious. He had taken for his wife a beautiful maiden from an alien nation who owned Allah for their God. The beautiful maid Soleyda came to Guluwe, the Khu Khoi,† young and richly dowered; and, above all, she lavished on him the entire and only love of a passionate heart of a passionate race.

* Hottentots and Bushmen.

† Chief of Chiefs.

She had prayed day and night to Allah to send her a true love. What is the power of a God ?

After the space of a few moons her husband wearied of her because there was no "little son."

Guluwe wearied of Selyda, and the women of his tribe were aware, and scoffed at her because there was no "little son."

Days and nights Selyda wept bitter tears, and called upon her God-power with all the might of her injured womanhood.

"Allah ! Allah ! That I may have a little son. Allah ! Allah ! "

One day at sunrise she arose and washed away her tears, clad herself in the richest of her jewelled robes, and sought her husband.

Guluwe sat at the door of his house under the cool shade of the pine-trees. Selyda left her people a little space, and approaching, knelt before her lord, erstwhile her lover. She said :

"O Heaven-born ! O my Heart's Heart ! Listen a little to Selyda. I know how small—how poor a thing I am in thine eyes, yet have pity ; see, I am scoffed at by the women of thy tribe. Remember, I pray thee, I am not their sister, but an alien. Shall the rose expand except the sun shine upon her ? But the lily dies not in the shade. Suffer me to depart hence a little. Bethink thee of the long grassy pastures by the sea. The Korannas love not the sea,

but I love it. Suffer me to depart hence—I and my people, and the people and the flocks thou shalt give me to guard for thee. There will I build me houses and watch over thy flocks ; and there, O my lord, my beloved, perhaps wilt thou sometimes repair to lighten the solitude of Seleyda."

Guluwe was not ungentle ; he drew his love-lorn wife towards him, pressed his lips upon her jewelled brow, and said :

" Even so, my Seleyda ; do as thou wilt and fear not. Am I not Khu Khoi ? "

So Seleyda builded houses and established herself and all her people, and the servants and slaves of her husband, on the grassy pastures that slope from the mountains to the south, with the sea to the east and the sea to the west. And the flocks and herds of Guluwe, her husband, fed upon the sun-warmed inmountain sides.

Guluwe caine to see Seleyda, his wife, at first from moon to moon ; but after a while the intervals became longer and longer, and the visits shorter and shorter.

When the crescent moon arose in the night-sky, Seleyda sent all her people who were Korannas up the valley to keep the vigil of the crescent with the rest of the tribe.

Onee when they were gone a great joy came to her. A little child lay in her bosom. Her first

thought was : "Ah, my husband will love me now when he sees this little daughter." Then a great fear came upon her. What if he should love only the little daughter, and take her away to himself ? So Seleyda vowed to herself that she would keep her knowledge and her treasure, and the babe was reared in secret in her mother's house. Only when all were at rest Seleyda took her little one forth into the sweet night air. Yet the maid grew more beautiful in the moonlight than ever another in the sunlight.

When, after this, Guluwe came to visit his wife, unconsciously he missed in her soft eyes the pleading, hopeless look of unrequited love.

The little maid grew to be strong and tall. Her mother had chosen two Koranna maids to be her companions. If Daimüs and Demazana were lovely, it was as the stars are to the moon. As for Rajüs, the luminous depth of the still, tropical night was in her eyes ; the darkness of its shadows in her luxuriant hair ; the clear warm pallor of the moonflowers in her brow and throat. Perhaps the prayers to Allah won her these.

Perhaps the unuttered desire of her father's heart, when he kept the vigil of the crescent moon, won from Tikquoa the perfect beauty of her supple limbs and untutored grace.

To Daimüs and Demazana, Seleyda gave gown

and kaross* of finest lambswool, with chains of sparkling beads for ankles, arms, and throat ; but her daughter she clad with the rich embroidered stuff of her own far land, binding the long, fine tresses of the maid with her own bridal gems, changeable as the sea, glistening as the early dew.

Half-way up the mountain is a clear, still pool. One moonlit night the maids stood among the green and pink anemones at its edge, gazing in to measure each her beauty and her destiny. Daimüs said :

“ For my love, he must be strong and grand and powerful.”

Demazana said :

“ My love must love me best of all.”

Then to Rajüs they said :

“ What wilt thou, Most Beautiful ? ”

Looking into the clear, still pool, seeing therein her own deep eyes and deeper heart, Rajüs said :

“ When I find my love, I shall know and love him always, always, always ! ”

She spoke the passion of her race—to love at sight, and for ever.

Often they wandered along the sands. The jubilant surf sparkles and laughs to the calm ripple of the tranquil bay—quiet, limitless in the starlight, treacherous in its exceeding beauty, treacherous in its

* Mantle.

love-laden song—the song of a passion-tossed, changeful heart.

Where the curve of the bay inclines to the north is a narrow cove, deep, deep-piled with sand, white, glistening sand—wave upon wave, hill upon hill—silent, sunlit in the calm, still days; towering, swirling, blinding, inexorable in the fury of the hot south-east wind.

Rajüs loved this cove.

At noon, betwixt the glaring sun and hotter-baked white sand, the air was furnace-heated; but at night a fresh, sweet breeze comes up from the bay, soft as the voice of love.

One night, prone upon a sand-hill, Rajüs turned from the star-lit sea and said:

“I shall find him here—my Beloved.”

Daimüs and Demazana wound their soft arms about her. Daimüs said:

“Shall we pray that our sweet sister have her heart’s desire? See the stars—the souls of our dead fathers look down on us to-night. Shall we pray?”

Demazana said:

“Rajüs, shall we sing? See, I have my kainkee! * Shall we sing to Tikqua?”

Then the maids sang their moon-hymns. Rajüs had a large donax-shell in her hand; she tossed the sands idly about with it. She said:

* A musical instrument, somewhat like a mandolin.

“I will make a deep, deep grave from east to west,
and see what the ocean will bury there for me.”

After this came days and nights of wind storm,
and the maids tarried within the house of Soleyda.
Then came the crescent moon, and all the Korannas
went up the valley to keep the vigil.

Up among the sand hills Daimüs and Demazana
sang again their moon-hymns, and Rajüs idly tossed
the sands with her donax-shell.

All at once the shell struck something hard. The
maid sprang up and called aloud :

“Look, look, Daimüs—look, Demazana; I have
found my love !”

She held up in the moonlight a small, gold-set,
crystal-sheltered picture—of a man.

The two maids stopped their hymns to look at the
treasure, but most they looked at Rajüs—Rajüs trans-
figured, her breast heaving, her eyes burning, her lips
apart.

To one another they said :

“She cannot wait like us—she loves him first.”

Rajüs hid the picture in her bosom, and from then
her deep eyes took on a fervid glow. At daybreak,
her mother meeting her, as was her wont, said :

“What is it, my daughter—my Heart’s Joy ?”

Rajüs said :

“I have found my love.”

Soleyda looked at the picture and said :

"Child, it is some long-dead Christian."

Raju said :

"What is a Christian?"

Seleyda said :

"They come hither from the North. They know not Allah, but worship their God of the Cross, and they care for neither joy, nor pain, so they serve Him."

Raju said :

"I will have no god but thee, O my Beloved!"

And she pressed the picture to her throbbing heart.

* * * * *

It is the hottest month. The sun is fierce, yet sullen. A lurid light is over the sea. The south-east wind sweeps with resistless fury up the bay—up, up among the sand hills, raising pillars of white shining grit, then dashing them back—back to the greedy ocean. A man, amid the storm-waves of sand and sea, cries out above the tempest :

"Christus! Christus!"

He battles with destiny. His feet sink in white shifting depths of sand. His face is bruised with hot furious blasts of grit and foam. He plunges forward. He stretches out beseeching arms. He staggers—falls—succumbs. The sand waves bear him hither and yon, up and up, handling with some mercy the poor, helpless body, which strives no longer; leaving him at last at rest upon a cast-up heap, beneath the black shadow of the mountain. With quick reaction

of expended energy the wind is lulled. The man moves a little, and moans.

“I, being old and longing to die, shall live, shall live. Christus, Christus ! is my life work yet undone ?”

The man lifts himself wearily ; an old man. The burning sun beats down upon his grey head. He shades his sun-dazed eyes and looks out to sea—the great blue sun-warmed, white-capped sea. But the white sails that the old man tries to discern on its bosom are not there.

Shipwrecked, abandoned — abandoned on the glistening, shifting, whispering sands.

The old man thrusts his hand eagerly within his mantle. Ah ! it is safe.

He draws forth a cross, a silver cross. He presses it devotedly to his parched lips—

“Christus ! Christus !”

He falls back upon the sand again. Will Christus save him ?

The sun sinks suddenly behind the mountain. Soft, cool airs waft upward, and fan tenderly the prostrate figure. The still, comforting darkness falls, and the stars look down from Heaven. Borne up with the night airs is a sweet sound ; not the rippling surf, not the whispering sands, but soft, clear girl voices, and Demazana playing upon her kamkee.

* * * *

In the eastern face of the mountain is the narrow

mouth of a cave. Millions of years the flow of the sandy tide has washed into it, and ebbing, left behind innumerable ridges of shells. Millions of years the south-east winds have driven sand against sand, shells against shells, till the cave's mouth is a secret. This is the secret the three maids gave to Frei João; and the secret he gave to them was the story of his Christus.

Daimüs and Demazana listened wistfully to the old man, but Rajüs—Rajüs kissed her picture and said :

“ I will have no god but thee, O my Beloved.”

“ Child, child,” Frei João said, “ he is dead, dead. Christ have mercy on his soul, for he hath the face of the Affonsos of my country, and of my faith.”

The warm nights passed, and the cool nights came. The maids were glad to wrap themselves each in her kaross. Then came the warm nights again. The mountain sides were scarlet with the heath’s bloom, and the pine trees were all new-tipped with young green.

Once at daybreak, the maids tarried over long on the sand hills, listening to Frei João’s tale of the Babe at Bethlehem, watching to see the new-born sun rays reach out upon the purple bay. So it chanced that Rajüs ran to her mother’s house, and into her mother’s arms, flushed, panting.

“ Ma-ma. Ma-ma !”

Ah, poor mother, the realisation of her long-sought

joy was but the trail of the serpent in her earthly paradise. She held the girl close. She found no power to speak or lift her down-bent eyes. They stood together, Seleyda and her daughter, before Guluwe, and Guluwe said :

“ Who is this maid, Seleyda ? ” and when she answered not—

“ Who art thou, child ? ”

Then Rajüs, with the fine courage of her race, said :

“ I am the daughter of Guluwe, the great Khu Khoi, and the Princess Seleyda is my beloved mother.”

Guluwe said :

“ O my wife Seleyda, verily thou hast done wisely to guard so jealously our daughter ; and the maid is worthy of her parentage.”

The words were gentle, but like the cruel point of an assegai they pierced the heart of the mother.

When the Khu Khoi had departed, Seleyda crouched upon the ground and wept. Rajüs with tender little hands caressed her mother and cooed—

“ Why grievest thou, Ma-ma, my mother ? Lo, my father is pleased with us.”

Seleyda said :

“ Hush thee, O Heart of my Heart ; the Khu Khoi will take thee from me, sweet Light of my Life. The

daughter of the Khu Khoi is already the promised bride of the powerful Bosjesmans."

Rajüs sat upright, her close folded lips made a straight red line. She said :

"I will have none other lover, and no husband, save my one own Beloved."

* * * * *

Rajüs, the night-nurtured—Rajüs, she who scarce knew the sunlight, stood now beneath its pitiless glare with Soleyda.

Beautiful mother, beautiful daughter, hand in hand upon the low smooth slopes above the moaning surf.

Rajüs shades her eyes to gaze.

"What is yonder moving down the mountain pass, mother?"

"It is the Khu Khoi with his chiefs, and the Bosjesmans with his braves."

"Do they come hither to take us, mother?"

"Allah protect us, O Heart of my Heart!"

"What is yonder white, out upon the bay, mother?"

"The ships of the Christians from the North."

"Why come they hither, mother?"

"Allah save us, O sweet Light of my Life. Whatsoever they seek they will perish to secure."

"What means the moaning sea, the angry light, mother?"

"Allah forgive us, Child of my Soul, these are the signs of tempest—shipwreck—death."

* * * * *

A great storm. A rushing mighty wind. A cloud-swept sky. The fury and the passion of wind and sand, love and hate, gods and mortals. They met and strove in the sand hills, and some triumphed, some were vanquished that night. The sea broke thunderingly upon the shore, rolling up and up, ploughing, dashing, dragging the sand. The wind thick, heavy-laden with glistening, stinging grit, swept up and up the cove, howling, shrieking in its frenzy. Yet above all are the shouts of the men, who call upon their gods.

"Tikqua ! Tikqua !"

"Allah ! Allah !"

"Christus ! Christus ! Christus !"

* * * * *

Daimüs and Demazana crouch weeping in Frei Joäo's cave, but Rajüs—ah Rajüs—the night has no terror for her. Her heart is throbbing with jubilant exultation. She has found her love, and he loves her. She knows it. The low tremble of his voice, his breath upon her cheek, his arm about her waist—ah, she knows it. What should she care for worlds of sand, of wind, of men; eternity of pain; shrieks of blind death? Above the tumult is her shout of victory :

"I will have no god but thee, O my Beloved.
Christus ! Christus ! Christus !"

* * * * *

The southern Christmas sun climbs the mountain
and looks down upon the white, cruel solitude of the
sand hills.

Like wreaths of seaweed are the dead bodies of Korannas and Bosjesmans ; their arrows were of small avail in the darkness against the swords of the Christians. Apart and alone lie two, locked in a close, last farewell. One is Guluwe, the great Khu Khoi ; the other Selyeda, his once neglected wife. If in life she had lost her heart's desire, in death he was all her own, reclaimed past peradventure. Her long, heavy hair, that once he had so loved to kiss, covered his face and hers. Day and night, from moon to moon, she had prayed. Did her God hear ? Allah ! Allah !

Christmas—Christmas at sunrise. Three ships sail out of the purple bay. The foremost carries away some whom she had never brought.

There are two brown-eyed maids singing moon hymns, and Demazana has her kamkee.

There is an old man content to die, because his eyes have seen the glory of his mortal lord—Affonso, and of his immortal God—Christus.

There is the triumphant commander, the Christian knight, who, with rapturous soul, sings "Gloria !" and gathers to his heart his bride.

And there is Rajüs—Rajüs, more beautiful than day or night.

Rajüs, whose power to love claimed of all else surrender.

Rajüs, who sings :

“ Thy God shall be my God, O my Beloved !
Christus ! Christus ! Christus ! ”

UTIKA.

An imaginary romance suggesting the origin and finding of the first great yellow diamond in South Africa. Before the advent of Europeans the journey from all the wide district north of the Orange River to the foot of Table Mountain was frequently made by native chiefs.

L

ONCE a girl and a boy played together in a beautiful, far-away land, whose shores are washed by warm southern seas.

The sky is sweet pure blue, and the sea is blue, only darker.

The wind is so soft, it is like a kiss on the girl's soft cheek.

The girl is beautiful—more beautiful than the stars.

The boy is beautiful also, because he is straight as a young pine and strong.

The boy knows his strength, and is proud of it; and the girl knows she is beautiful.

The boy's name is Quitéve.*

The girl's name is Alured.

Quitéve loves Alured with all the passion of his youth and strength.

* A Kaffir chief. He was worshipped by his followers as a god.

Alured loves all that is beautiful ; she loves herself most of all with the selfishness of youth.

Together these two roam unfettered in their beautiful land.

Quitéve gathers flowers for Alured—ixias and fresias—and she puts them in her hair and in her dress, and laughs for joy of them. Then he gathers shells for her—green sea urchins and pink heliotis—and strings them, and Alured winds them around her slender throat and about her round arms and her slim waist, and laughs again.

Quitéve gazes at the girl with love-lit eyes and says softly to her :

“ How beautiful ! how beautiful you are ! Will you love me now, Alured ? ”

But she runs away along the sands, still laughing, and then stops a little to watch the blue-green waves creep up to kiss the low shell-strewn rocks.

As the day wanes they stand hand in hand to watch the setting sun. Oh, the beauty of that sky, dyed deep, deep orange at the horizon, rolling up and up in creases and folds of gold and paler and paler yellow ; and below the shining gold dancing out and out upon the blue ocean’s sheen ! Alured gazes and gazes till her soul is overwrought with passionate desire for the beauty of it. She reaches out her arms and cries :

"Oh, it is beautiful ! it is heavenly, it is *Utika* ! *
O Quitéve, give it me: give it me ! I want it so !"

Quitéve falls upon his knees. "How can I give it you, Alured ?" The girl says :

"I know not. You tell me you love me ; if you love me, give me the beautiful Utika."

Quitéve looks up at her, his head thrown back, a hot flush on his brow, his great dark eyes kindling.

"If I give it you, Alured, will you love me ?"

He speaks low, his breath comes quickly.

Alured does not look at him, but only at the beautiful western sky; her arms drop to her sides. "Yes," she says, and still stands looking westward.

Quitéve springs to his feet :

"Good-bye, my beloved ; I will come to you again. I will bring you—Utika. Give me one kiss, my beloved."

But Alured moves not. Quitéve lifts one of the down-hanging hands still holding the blooms he gathered for her erstwhile.

He takes the blue-green ixias from it and kisses it only once, then with the ixias tight-grasped he speeds away over the sand.

The orange and golden creases draw closer and closer. The line at the horizon where the sun has set

* Meaning beautiful, as applied by the old Hottentots of Cape Colony to "The Greatest," "The God," "the Creator of the Universe."

is fiery red, and across in the east there is a warm, rosy glow; but even as Alured gazes the red and yellow lights fade, are gone; the sky is cold dull grey, and the sea is dull grey too. Alured turns shivering.

“Quitéve, take me home.”

But Quitéve is gone. Alured weeps: she loves not to be alone. Sobbing, she says:

“Quitéve will return and bring me the Utika.”

Then she walks slowly across the sands away to her father’s house behind the mimosa and the silver protea * trees.

The sea moans faintly, and creeping up the sands washes away the footprints of Alured and her lover.

II.

Now, Quitéve, the young chief, lived in the King’s house, and served the King whenever he had need.

So now Quitéve ran till he came to the King’s house, and into the presence of the King, and threw himself down before the King.

And the King said:

“What is it, Quitéve?”

And Quitéve said:

“May thy servant speak, O King?”

And the King said:

“Speak on, Quitéve.”

* Indigenous only at the foot of the Table Mountain.

Quitéve said :

" I beseech thee hear thy servant, O King. I love a maid, oh ! beyond the love my tongue can tell, but unless I can prove to her my great love it is not gracious in her eyes. There is a thing the maiden much desires—suffer me to go and seek this thing, O my King, suffer me to go ! "

And Quitéve clasped his hands, and his eyes were full of eager prayer.

The King said :

" Where wouldst thou go, Quitéve ? "

Quitéve said :

" Away, away across the mountains, beyond the Karroo. I am strong, O King ; suffer me to go."

The King said :

" Foolish boy, thou wilt suffer cold and hunger and thirst. If thou escape the lion, the python, and the adder, thou wilt fall into the hands of other tribes who love not me, nor my people, and thou wilt perish miserably."

Quitéve said :

" I pray thee to suffer me to go, O King ; I am strong and I fear nothing."

The King said :

" But the maid is a loveless maid, seeing she sends thee on such a journey. Will nothing less content her than thy life ? "

Quitéve said :

"O King, I love not my life, but to win the love of the maid. I pray thee suffer me to go, and I will return again."

The King said :

"Go, Quiteve."

So Quiteve rose up and bowed himself before the King, and departed out of the presence of the King.

Now, there was also in the King's house a man of wisdom, full of years; his hair was grey, his eyes piercing, his back bent with age; and he was also an alien, as his forefathers had been aliens always: coming from the North, and teaching and guiding with their knowledge those who would learn of them. Now, this man of wisdom in the King's house was called, like his forefathers before him, Kintu*—Kintu the Blameless. To him came Quiteve and said :

"O Kintu, my father, lo, I go a long journey to seek the red gold light of the setting sun; tell me, I pray thee, how shall I seek, how shall I secure ?"

Kintu looked keenly at the boy, and said :

"Courage and strength and patience and knowledge. Courage to fight, strength to overcome, and patience to endure, and so through suffering knowledge. But wherefore wilt thou not rest content, O my son, and remain here, where if not wise, thou may'st at least be happy ?"

* "The Blameless Priest." A very old myth. He came from the North, and taught gentleness and mercy.

Quitéve said :

" I am no longer happy, O Kintu, my father; I must go. I am strong, I fear nothing. Speed me and guide me, O Kintu."

Kintu said :

" Away beyond these mountains is the Karroo; and away beyond the Karroo other mountains yet more lofty, and a mighty river Gariep.* When thou art come to the most narrow part of the river, where the great rocks on either side arch over, stand alone and watch for the setting sun; and when the sky is red, red as fire, then cry aloud upon Muriro,† and Muriro will come. He is the Fire King, and thou must even do his bidding and learn of him. I can guide thee no further. Yet, my son, consider—thou wilt encounter many savage beasts, venomous snakes, cruel tribes. Thou wilt long for bread and find none. Thou wilt pray for water and find it not. The great burning sun of the Karroo will burn thee. The cold, cold breath of the mountains will numb thee. Thy body will languish. Thy heart will fail, and then Bariimo‡ will torment thee. At last, 'Reza,'§ who watches for the weak, and kills them with his breath

* The old name of the Orange River.

† Kaffir Fire King.

‡ Collective name for spirits of Bantu race. Mortals were greatly in awe of them.

§ A Kaffir god of above who kills, of below who carries them away to his dark regions after death.

and drags them down, down—Reza will claim thee!"

He stopped and gazed sternly at the boy with his piercing eyes. But Quiteve quailed not. He said:

"I will go to Muriro. I will dare Reza. Cold nor heat, nor want nor thirst, nor toil I heed not. Wild beasts, nor men, nor spirits I fear not, so only I win my desire."

Kintu said :

"Boy, thou hast a strong and noble heart. Go and seek knowledge."

Then Quiteve sped away.

After many days and nights of peril and suffering Quiteve came to the great river Gariep, and followed it eastward, and so he came to the narrow pass. Many sunsets he waited, till at last came one that was red, red as fire. Then he summoned all the courage of his heart and called aloud :

"Muriro ! Muriro !"

And behold, Muriro leapt out of the midst of a great rock and stood before him.

Now, Muriro was small of stature and ill-favoured. His hair was red and coarse and knotted about his face. His eyes were red, red like fire.

But Quiteve quailed not, but thought steadfastly of that which he desired to learn of Muriro.

But Muriro laughed aloud when he saw Quiteve and heard his desire. He cried, "Ha, ha ! ho, ho ! the

red gold light of the setting sun ! Ngolu* stole it once. Ngolu imprisoned it deep, deep down below the earth ; his slaves watch it. You must bind yourself to Ngolu and bargain with him, he alone can give it you. He will make you labour all day, all day and every day, and at last Reza will have you. Ha, ha ! the red gold light ! ”

Then Quiteve shuddered ; still his heart was true, and in sorrow he had got patience to endure. He said :

“ I will go to Ngolu.”

Then Muriro told him how he should go, and Quiteve turned him about and leaving the broad river Gariep behind him, toiled northward over the great Karroo.

Oh ! the hot, hot sand underfoot !

Oh ! the hot, hot sun overhead !

Courage, Quiteve !

At last, after many, many sunsets Quiteve came by night to a certain Kopje in the midst of the Karroo, and set him down to rest. Sleep came to him, and a beautiful dream. He stood again upon the sands with Alured. The blue-green waves ran up to cool his bruised feet. Together they watched the sun go down, and the red gold light. And Alured was more lovely in his eyes even than of old, for she turned her eyes, more beautiful than the stars, upon him, and laid her

* The Satan of Basutoland. The Guardian of Gold.

round soft arm about his neck, and pressed her sweet lips rosy as the dawn upon his brow—Ah!—He awakes, and lo, he is on the lonely Kopje in the great Karroo. Someone speaks to him, and he knows it is Ngolu. He said :

“ Boy, what do you here ? ”

Quitéve rises up. He feels his heart refreshed and strong. He says :

“ I have come to seek the red gold light of the setting sun—which you have imprisoned. I know you, Ngolu.” Now Ngolu was of a smiling, pleasant countenance, and had a smooth tongue. When he saw Quitéve he desired to have him, for he had much need in his kingdom of young men who were strong ; so he smiled and spoke gently, and said :

“ Then you wish to come with me to my kingdom, and be my servant ? ”

Quitéve said :

“ For how long ? ”

Ngolu still smiled and said :

“ First seven years, then I will give you a little of the imprisoned light ; and then other seven years—or will you be content to remain always ? ”

Quitéve said :

“ Seven years will I labour for you, then shall you give me the red gold light of the setting sun, and I shall be free.”

Ngolu laughed aloud, but he said low :

" After seven years Reza shall have him ! "

Quitéve said :

" Vow to me after seven years you will give me the red gold light, and I shall be free."

So Ngolu vowed ; and Quitéve bound himself to Ngolu, and followed him into a hole that was in the Kopje, whence they descended deep into the bowels of the earth.

There Quitéve saw much treasure, and began the heavy labour of a slave.

III.

ALURED lives in her father's house among the silver protea and the mimosa trees. There are orchards of orange, and loquat, and guava ; plantations of banana, gardens shaded by palm trees and full of poinsettia and moonflower blooms, gladiolus and amaryllis and the sweet but modest cinnamonum, that hides itself all the day and gives to the night its exquisite perfume.

Alured is beloved of her father. He gives her fine muslins and rich embroideries, and slaves to do her bidding. But Alured is no longer happy. Care has come to her who was so careless. Often she leaves her father's house and walks alone along the sands, watching the waves, or later the red gold light of the setting sun, and stretches out her arms and cries passionately :

" O the beautiful Utika ! O Quitéve ! "

Alas, Quiteve comes not.

One evening when the sun had gone down, and the sea and the sky were dull grey, Alured throws herself upon the sands and cries softly :

“ O Quiteve, I love you ! Come to me, come back to me ! ”

The sea comes sobbing up about her feet—“ Come back, come back ! ”

Then old Kintu approaches from the King’s house and draws nigh to the girl—for being a man of wisdom, he knows why Quiteve sped away. He stands beside the girl lying prone upon the sands and says :

“ Alured, do not stay your tears. Weep for Quiteve.”

Alured springs up and says :

“ Why should I weep for Quiteve ? I will not weep.”

Kintu says :

“ Quiteve suffers much for Alured. He has given himself in bondage, and labours as a slave to win for her the red gold light of the setting sun. Ah ! what love ! Weep for him, girl, and weep for yourself.”

But Alured is angered, and covers her face with her mantle, and turns away her steps towards her father’s house.

* * * *

Now, one day it was told the King—“ Behold, O King, there is a maid who lives by the sea in her

father's house, and she is more beautiful than the stars."

So the King commanded that she should appear before him.

Therefore Alured, with her father and her slaves, came before the King. And the King looking upon her, perceived that she was marvellously beautiful.

He said :

" What is thy name, maiden ? "

She said :

" Alured."

The King said to Alured's father :

" Leave the maid here—she shall dwell in the Queen's house that she may be taught many things."

Then Alured's father bowed himself before the King, and said :

" I beseech thee, O King, take not the maid from her old father, suffer her to follow me again to our poor home."

And Alured sprang forward to go with her father ; but the King said to those that stood near :

" Take the maiden to the Queen's house."

Then those that were about the King led her away ; and her father returned to his house alone.

Now, as Alured was passing on to the Queen's house, Kintu walked beside her, and he said :

" Take courage, Alured ; get patience to endure, and through suffering thou may'st attain knowledge."

Thus the girl passed into the Queen's house, where were many maids who wrought daily for the Queen, and tended her, and made sweet music upon many instruments. But Alured was more beautiful than any, and for this they loved her not.

All the days Alured wearied at her work, and all the nights she wept.

Now, the Queen knew sorrow, and she pitied Alured, but durst make no sign.

One day it was told Alured :

“ Behold, thy father is stricken ! ”

Then Alured dried her tears and went to the Queen. And the Queen smiled upon Alured and spake softly, and said :

“ What wouldst thou, beautiful Alured ? ”

Alured said :

“ O Queen, I pray thee ask the King that he suffer me to return to my father, for my father aileth much, and suffereth much, and I fear that he will die.”

The Queen said :

“ When it is evening and I take the King a cup of maramba,* thou shalt deck me, and I will ask for thee, Alured.” And that same evening Alured was suffered to return to her father's house. Kintu came and led her thither. And as they went he said :

“ Thy father will die, Alured ! ”

* A strong spirit made often from the banana, taken just before sleep at night. Always brought to the great chief by his wife.

The girl wept and cried :

"Oh, I will comfort him and tend him ! He shall not die ! I have been wicked, loving only myself : but surely I have been punished. He shall not die !"

So Alured came again to her father's house, and wept over her father, and kissed him and tended him day and night.

One evening as the sun set and the red gold light was in the western sky, the old man cried aloud :

"Alured !"

And Alured came and kissed him, and he looked upon her and said :

"Alured, how beautiful thou art !"

Then the girl flung herself upon the ground and cried out :

"Oh, no ! oh, no ! I would be wise, not beautiful."

But the old man heard her not, for he was dead.

Alured mourned and mourned for her father, and said :

"Perhaps I have also killed Quiteve ! Oh, that I too were dead !"

One day she rose up and sent one of her people that he should beg Kintu to come to her.

When he was come she said .

"O Kintu, my father, I have borne much and suffered much sorrow. My heart is broken. I love Quiteve. He is good and brave and true, yet have I driven him away. To-morrow I shall set out to seek

him. If he is bound, I will be bound. If he labours, I will labour beside him. If he suffers, I will suffer with him."

Then Kintu turned away his face, for he would not the girl should see his emotion. He said :

" Go, Alured."

So Alured ordered her house, and put away her fine muslins and embroideries, and wrapped herself in a dark, coarse mantle, and set forth.

Alured toiled through the forest and up the mountain. The cruel stones wounded her tender feet, and Alured sat upon a rough stone and wept.

" O my Quitéve, shall I ever find you ? I love you now. O Quitéve, forgive me—forgive me. I love you now ! "

The night came, and the cold breath of the mountain chilled the poor maid, but she murmured not. She said :

" My Quitéve has suffered cold."

Then she came, after many sunsets, to the Karroo. Oh, the burning hot sand beneath her little feet ! Oh, the burning hot sun above her gentle head ! Yet she murmured not. She said :

" My Quitéve has suffered heat."

At last, after many sunsets, she came to the mighty river Gariep, and she sat down upon its banks and wept afresh, and cried :

" How shall I cross ? "

Night came as Alured walked along the river bank, seeking a narrow place where perchance she might cross. As she walked came Nkissi,* spirit of her father, and said :

“Comfort ye, my daughter; do not seek to cross. Abide awhile. They also serve who abide patiently.”

So Alured was comforted, and strove for patience. But every evening she went a little way and stood upon a Kopje, and gazed upon the red gold light of the setting sun, and lifted up her hands and cried :

“O Utika! O my Quitéve!”

One evening as she stood thus, her whole heart yearning, her beautiful eyes grown deep and patient in suffering, her slender form grown yet more slender with toil, her soft cheeks grown pale with want—suddenly—suddenly her heart leapt up.

Away in the west glowed the red gold light of the setting sun, making a red gold pathway below on the Karroo, and there in the pathway, running towards her, came Quitéve!

“Oh, my love! Quitéve, Quitéve!” And Alured sank down upon the Kopje; for joy after long pain is painful joy.

Then Quitéve drew near, and knew his dear love, and took her in his arms and kissed her sweet wan face, and said :

* Kaffirs and Zulus believe that the spirits of their fathers appear to warn or comfort them.

"Alured, my beloved, I am here; I will shelter you for ever. O Alured, how beautiful you are! Look up, my beloved. I have brought you the red gold light of the setting sun. Alured, will you love me now?"

And Alured flung her arms about his neck and kissed his brow and his love-lit eyes, and cried:

"O my beloved, I have loved you always! Have I found you at last?"

Then they two sat together on the Kopje, and Quiteve showed to Alured a large stone clear and sparkling like water, full of red gold light. He said:

"It is the gold light of the setting sun. Ngolu imprisoned it deep in the bowels of the earth. I have laboured long, and at last I have won it for you. Take it, my Alured."

So Alured took it in her hand and said:

"Quiteve, it is Love. It is our *Utika*. It shall be sacred between us for ever."

Then these two kissed one another, and set forth to return together to their own land.

* * * * *

Now, after many sunsets, Quiteve and Alured came to the mountains that were near to their own land; and as they passed through the cleft in the mountain, and saw below the silver protea trees and

the mimosa trees, they wept for joy. So blessed is the sight, after long sad exile, of one's own beloved land again !

At last came Alured to her own home, and Quiteve with her ; and these two were at peace.

IV.

Now, at this time one told the King and said :

" Lo, O King, Alured the maid, who was once in the Queen's house, and Quiteve are returned from afar."

So the King commanded that they should appear before him.

Therefore Alured and Quiteve came before the King, and bowed themselves down before the King. The King looked fixedly at them both, but he spoke first to Quiteve, and said :

" Behold, thou art returned, Quiteve. Thou art grown in years and in strength. Give account of thyself. Hast thou brought for the loveless maid that thing which she did so lightly desire of thee ? "

Quiteve said :

" Yea, O King, I have brought the red gold light of the setting sun."

The King said :

"Where wentest thou ; how gottest thou the red gold light of the setting sun ? Give account of thyself."

Then Quiteve stood straight before the King and said :

"O King, I journeyed beyond these mountains, and across the Karroo to further mountains, where I found Muriro ; and having suffered much and attained patience, I learned of Muriro, and proceeded on again past the great river Gariep to the great Karroo. After many sunsets I came to Ngolu, and to Ngolu I bound myself, and went with him into the bowels of the earth and laboured seven years. Always Ngolu thought Reza would claim me ; but my heart was steadfast, for I had got patience, and I thought ever of Alured. At last, when Ngolu could detain me no longer, because of the vow that he had vowed to me, he suffered me to depart, and I brought with me the red gold light of the setting sun, which Ngolu had imprisoned, to give to my Alured. Behold, O King, the red gold light of the setting sun ! "

And Quiteve turned to Alured, who took from her bosom the clear sparkling stone, the imprisoned light, and gave it to Quiteve, who put it before the King.

And the King gazed upon it. Then the King lifted his eyes and gazed upon Alured and marked her gentle grace, and the King said :

"Stand forth, Alured."

And Alured stood forth from among her slaves, more beautiful than the stars. She had clothed herself again with fine muslins, and had bound herself with chains of pearls that were in her father's house, and had wound other chains of pearls about her throat and arms and ankles, and a silken girdle about her waist, that she might be well adorned to come before the King.

The King said :

"Tell me, Alured, art thou that loveless maid ? Why did'st thou desire this thing so lightly of thy lover ?"

Alured made answer and said :

"O King, I pray thee have patience with me. I was a foolish maid, loving myself most. I looked at the red gold light of the setting sun, and longed for it because it was so beautiful; and I asked my lover, of his love for me, to give me my heart's desire. But when he was gone from me I knew that I loved him most, and I knew that in my foolish ignorance I gave pain to him I loved. At last, after much sorrow and tears, my proud heart was chastened. One who is wise taught me. Little by little I conquered my proud heart and strove for patience. At last I said, 'I will arise and seek my beloved ; if he is bound, I will be bound ; if he labours, I will labour beside him ; if he suffers, I will suffer with him.' So after many sunsets

I came to the great river Gariep, and there came my Quitevé to me again, and gave to me the treasure I had asked of him.

“ And I, all unworthy that I am, gave to him my love, which was his heart’s desire all these long years. Wherefore, O King, because the red gold light of the setting sun is beyond words beautiful, I call it Utika. And because the faithful love of a true heart is more beautiful than beauty it is verily Utika ! ”

Then Alured clasped her two hands, and lifted her sweet face to her beloved and said :

“ By courage and strength and patience and knowledge, O King, we have won our hearts’ desire. I beseech thee, O King, pardon the sins and folly of thy handmaiden ! ”

And Alured knelt before the King and bowed her head.

Then the King rose up and took Alured by the hand, and lifted her up, and put her hand into the hand of Quitevé, and said :

“ Blessed Alured ! Happy Quitevé ! Behold, ye have indeed suffered and conquered. Guard ever the love, the *Utika* you have won.”

Then the King gave again to Alured the imprisoned red gold light of the setting sun, and Alured and Quitevé passed out of the King’s house to their own home.

As they passed on Kintu walked beside them. He said :

“ Through courage and strength and patience and knowledge ye have won the best, O my children, the best Utika can give—faithful love.”

DIA DE NATAL.

Vasco de Gama discovered this beautiful country on Christmas Day,
and himself gave to it its beautiful name.

I.

FAR away from England there is a land beautiful
beyond compare.

Its eastern shores are washed by the warm blue
Indian Ocean.

Its mountain-peaks rear their cloud-sheltered
heads against the blue, blue southern sky.

The sun shines upon it by day with a clear hot
light that is red first, then gold, then red again.

The moon and the stars shine on it by night, with
a cool white light that is always the same.

Yet the stars at night are not more beautiful than
the strange wild flowers that grow by the sun's
warmth.

Its breezes are full of summer sweetness and soft
as the sigh of happy death.

Its fruits and flowers are the most thankful
children.

Its woodlands are a thousand sheltering homes,
and upon the uplands flocks and herds feed upon a
thousand hills.

Its life-song is the full rich carol of birds burdened only with joy.

In this land, long, long ago, there lived three people. Their lives were bound together with cords that but strengthened with time ; and that, however they were strained, but grew the stronger for the straining.

One man and two maids.

The man is young and straight.

The one maid is tall and straight also, and dark and very beautiful.

The other maid is small and slender, and very fair.

The man is a young chief.

The dark maid is a chief's daughter ; but the fair maid is alien, and—a slave.

The dark maid loves the man, and he loves her not.

The man loves the fair maid, but she loves not any man.

So in this beautiful land there is sorrow born of love. Yet in the end, the joy that comes to these three is a pure and perfect peace, that no power of tribulation can destroy.

The name of the young chief is :

“ Umlimo the Dreamer.”

The chief's daughter is “ Zanyana.”

The alien is “ Virginia.”

* * * *

In this land, which is so beautiful, and which has also a beautiful name, given to it on a beautiful day, there lived once a mighty chief, Ubukulu. Many, many fields were his, of waving corn, of tall green sugar-cane, of low-spiked pineapple, of sombre large-leaved banana. Of orange orchards, of tall oak, and dark pine groves, and single palms.

Also Ubukulu owned many slaves, who tilled his land and ministered to his household.

Also much land was his up in the hill-country ; and there his flocks and herds fed upon the sun-warmed slopes of the Drakensberg mountains.

Best of all, Ubukulu had seven sons ; but worst of all, no daughter.

The sons, save one, dwelt in the woodlands by the sea, near their father. Zembe the Heir ; Zomfani the eldest-born, and the others ; but the youngest, the Right-hand son, Umlimo the Dreamer, dwelt alone in the hill-country, and kept his father's flocks upon the mountain sides.

Umlimo wearied not alone all day, watching the sheep feed upon the purple slopes, or drinking at eventide, when he took them to the swift river's edge.

The sun warmed him all day, but when it dropped down below the sky-line, and the mists began to rise up in chill wreaths from the valley, then he wrapped himself well in his leopard-skin, that only chiefs may wear.

Then it was that Umlimo, though he slept not, dreamed dreams.

The soft clouds drop down to meet the upcreeping mists upon the mountain sides, take shapes of beauty, and fill the lad's soul with that desire of the unattainable that, like a mirage, lures with fair, false hope.

Then comes the dark, protecting night, and rest. Then the stars light up sky and earth. Bare stones shine white where they catch the star's rays. The sky stretches out and out to meet the sea ; the sea mirrors on its passionate bosom the stars that beautify the perfect night.

One afternoon, as Umlimo lay a-dreaming, Zomfani, the elder brother, mounted the hill and called aloud :

“ Umlimo ! Umlimo ! ”

Umlimo rose, ran to greet his brother, and said :

“ Wherefore art thou come hither, my brother ?
The flocks are well.”

Zomfani said :

“ For this I do rejoice, Umlimo. Yet listen. Behold, now, it is many moons since our father hath had news of thee. He wearies for tidings ; therefore am I come.”

Umlimo said :

“ Truly I am well, my brother. See, I grow strong. If a lion or a tiger come I fear not ; I can defend the flocks.”

Zomfani said :

" Yet dost thou never weary of such solitude, Umlimo ? "

Umlimo said :

" Never, my brother. I watch the sheep and lambs, that they suffer nothing."

But Umlimo said nothing of that which he loved most to watch.

Zomfani said :

" I have news for thee of our father ; he is well, and our brothers are well. Our father desires that thou shouldst leave the flocks and come to him ; for he is fain to look upon thy face."

Umlimo stood looking at the sinking sun. Now he knew why Zomfani had come to him. He turned not his head, but he said :

" I will go to my father."

Zomfani threw himself upon the ground, and Umlimo sat upon a stone beside his brother.

Zomfani said :

" I have further news for thee, Umlimo."

Umlimo said :

" Say on."

Zomfani said :

" The old chief, our father, hath chosen a wife for thee. The maid tarries with her father only till thou art come to lead her home."

Then Umlimo was troubled and sad at heart, for

he was loth to leave the hill or to take a wife ; nevertheless the old chief his father was precious in his eyes, and he faltered not to do his father's bidding.

It was after many sunsets the young chief Zomfani and Umlimo drew nigh to the home of the great chief Ubukulu the Mighty, and Umlimo knelt before his father.

Ubukulu said :

“ Arise, my son, my beloved son. Ah ! thou hast the face of thy mother, who knew thee not, and whom thou knewest never.”

Umlimo said :

“ My father, I lack nothing. The mountains have ever been mother to Umlimo ; but Umlimo will for ever serve his father. The flocks and the herds are well.”

Then Ubukulu smiled wistfully ; for as he looked upon the face of his son he remembered the beauty of his wife, the daughter of the great chief, “ he that was never afraid,” the joy of his old age, the boy’s mother so long dead.

Ubukulu said :

“ Thou art my youngest son—my Right-hand son. Abide here awhile, free to wander whithersoever thou wilt, so only thou stray not far from me, Umlimo.”

Umlimo bowed himself before his father and departed out of his presence. He went beyond the woodlands a space, and threw himself upon the

flowery ground, beyond where he might see the blue, blue sky that covers all.

All the long afternoon he idled there. At sunset a maid came out from the shady woodland and drew nigh to him.

She was very young, and very fair. Her hair was like the gold of the early sunset, her eyes soft blue-grey, like nothing he had ever seen, because he had never seen the Northern Sea. Her high voice was very sweet and gentle. She said :

“ Thy father calls for thee, Umlimo. I am sent to bid thee go to him.”

Umlimo said :

“ Who art thou ?

She said :

“ Thy father’s slave.” She hung her head and her lips trembled.

Then Umlimo was much troubled ; for he could not bear sorrow. He rose up quickly, spoke to the maid gently, and said :

“ Truly I will go to my father : but tell me first, I pray thee, what is thy name, and how camest thou hither ?”

Then the maid said :

“ My name is Virginia. I left my home and my country the better to serve my King, but doubtless I was unworthy, for I was suffered to be taken a prisoner upon the high seas, and sold here a slave.”

Umlino's eyes kindled. He said :

" Surely thy King hath little power, or he would send some to rescue thee."

Virginia said :

" My King is mightier than any. When I am worthy I shall be received into His glorious kingdom, with which there is none that can compare. But I pray thee tarry not, or thou shalt fail in thy duty, and I in mine."

Umlimo went slowly away, wondering much who that King might be, and where his glorious kingdom.

When he was come into his father's presence, his father said :

" Lo, thou art come, Umlimo ! Stand back a little from the door that the light may fall upon thee, that I may look upon thee, to see thee as thou art."

So Umlimo stood back, and the sun shone low through the trees upon his straight, upright form, glinting gold as it struck athwart the orange trees.

The old man's heart was warmed, for he saw the lad was well grown, strong of limb, and of a fair, fine countenance. He said :

" It is more than twenty moons since I saw thee last, Umlimo. Verily thou art grown since then ; and I am told thou hast killed many a lion on the mountain to defend the flocks. Now shalt thou abide here for a space and learn of chiefs to vanquish enemies, for there be those who love us not."

Umlimo answered not. Then his father said :

“ Thou answerest nothing. Thou art not content, Umlimo. Speak, my son.”

Umlimo said :

“ My father, I love the mountains. I love not the woodlands. I pray thee suffer me to continue to tend and guard thy flocks.”

Then Ubukulu said :

“ It is not meet for thee, my son, to bide always on the hills alone. I have great desires for thee. Hearken further. My friend Sarili is a great chief, as thou knowest. He has many flocks and herds, and much corn. Also he has a daughter; she is grown a comely maiden. It is my desire that thou shouldst lead her hither to be thy wife. Moreover, I will give thee a goodly gift to take to my friend Sarili, her father, when thou shalt go thither to his country.”

Umlimo listened to all the words of his father with a heavy heart, for he loved not the woodlands neither did he care for the chief Sarili’s daughter. He had seen her many moons back, when he had gone with his brothers to a great feast that Sarili had made for his heir. The maid was but a little slender damsel then, yet were all the young chiefs fain to covet her, for she was a great chief’s daughter and very beautiful, and Sarili had much cattle and much corn. Umlimo had kept apart with his brothers, loving not to see the maid so flattered; heeding not

that she looked sometimes at him. Also since then all his heart was full of the beautiful Barimo he had seen upon the mountain side, but he would tell no one this lest they should deride him, for most men of his people held the Barimo to be unfriendly. He sighed heavily and said :

“ My father’s wish I will obey ; nevertheless, I would my father might suffer me to return again to the mountains.”

Ubukulu said :

“ Yet tarry here a while, my son.”

So Umlimo left his father’s presence, yet tarried in his father’s home. He went sometimes with Zomfani down to the yellow sea-sands, sometimes far into the woodlands, and sometimes into the fields of yellow corn ; but whensoever he might he walked alone to where, above the woodlands, was a wide, open space, whence he could see the blue, blue sea below, and, stretching far and far into the clouds above, the hills where fed his flocks.

One time he came upon this spot at sunset and heard singing he knew not. It was Virginia. She stood looking towards the sea, the hills behind her. In her hand she held something glittering. She sang :

“ Thou Shepherd that dost Israel keep,
Give ear in time of need.”

As she finished, she caught sight of Umlimo, and

quickly thrust the glittering thing beneath the white folds of the gown that covered her bosom.

Umlimo drew near. He said :

“ Sing again, O Virginia, and tell me also, I pray thee, what hidest thou ? ”

The maid trembled and turned away, but Umlimo besought her gently and said :

“ Fear not, I will never harm thee or distress thee, Virginia.”

Then the maid said :

“ If I tell thee my secret I am undone.”

Umlimo looked at her, his great eyes full of pity. He said :

“ I will never betray thee. Take comfort, thou art not more alone here than I.”

Virginia said :

“ Thou art the favoured son of the great chief. Thou dwellest in the home of thy father and of thy kindred in thine own land—how sayest thou, then, thou art alone ? ”

Umlimo said :

“ O Virginia, I am a stranger here because I love not these woodlands. My heart yearns ever to return to the hills, to my flocks. Look, the red clouds of sunset shelter my mountains.”

Then they both turned to look upon the evening beauty of the far-off scene ; the lad fervid as the sunset glow, the maid steadfast as the everlasting hills.

Virginia said :

" Art thou a good shepherd ? Verily, a good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep."

Umlimo said :

" A strong man guardeth his flocks with his life."

Then Virginia drew from the folds over her bosom that which she had hidden therein. It was a silver cross hung upon a ribbon that was about her neck. She said :

" It is the emblem of my faith. I hide it lest it be taken from me, and I prize it much."

Umlimo looked upon the cross, but most upon the maid, and to his mind came vividly the recollection of the beautiful Barimo on the mountain side.

Virginia said :

" Hast thou ever in the night time seen in the heavens some stars that take this shape ?" and she held the silver cross aloft.

Umlimo said :

" Yes, at times. I have been told it is a sign that guided shepherds who came hither from the North many moons and moons past. They watched for it, and joyed to see it, journeying towards it."

Virginia clasped her hands, her eyes filled with tears. She said :

" Ah ! there were other shepherds who watched for one bright star and followed it. It is a blessed life to be a shepherd."

Umlimo caught her hands and cried :

“ Tell me, tell me about those other shepherds ? ”

The maid shook her head. She said :

“ Not now, I must return. Already I have tarried too long. See, the sun has gone. It will be dark under the pine trees.”

Then she turned and sped swiftly away through the woodlands, her white gown like a cloud about her slender form.

The light faded—darkness fell upon the land—yet Umlimo hastened not. Night was to him but the near approach of his beloved ideal. The sombre shadows were his shelter. The mountain mists the veil that scarce obscured the beauty of his long cherished love.

Yet this night he watched for the silver stars to shine out upon the sea.

II.

Now, Nozici, the woman of the house where Virginia abode, was mistress over the women slaves of Ubukulu and set them their daily tasks.

One night her little child burned with fever. Virginia carried it to and fro all the night, singing to soothe its pain. Therefore the woman was ever gentle with Virginia, and spoke well of her in the presence of the chief Ubukulu.

One day Nozici and Virginia sat together weaving mats, and Nozici told the maid that it was said, Umlimo, the young chief, should wed Zanyana, the chief Sarili's daughter.

Virginia said nothing, but questioned much her heart if this should be a great happiness to Umlimo.

Not many days after, Umlimo sought Virginia and found her in the garden of Nozici, where she stayed behind the others to crush millet.

Umlimo drew nigh to the maid and said :

" Sit down a little, Virginia."

So they sat together upon a large stone whence they could look across fields and fields, and over lower groves of orange trees, to where the sands stretched far out to the blue sea.

Umlimo said :

" Tell me, Virginia, who is thy King."

She said :

" His name is Christ."

He said :

" Where dwells thy King ? "

She said :

" High, high up above the mountains—above the stars. Above that star-cross those shepherds saw and you have seen is His kingdom of glory."

He said :

" Why lovest thou thy shining cross ? "

She said :

" My King once suffered much upon a cross."

He said :

" Knowest thou how came the star-cross in the night sky ? "

She said :

" I believe, before the days of the oldest shepherds, my God so placed those stars, doubtless to be a guide to those who sought. And once another star that guided other shepherds. Shepherds have ever sought more for others than for themselves."

Umlimo said :

" Virginia, listen. Often at evening I watch the mountains. I see forms—fair, white—come floating down with the clouds. Sometimes they retire, soaring aloft. Sometimes they disappear. Oh, they are beautiful ! beautiful ! Tell me, are they Barimo of the country of your King ? "

The boy threw himself at her feet, his eyes aglow.

Virginia arose and stood looking up at the hills. She said :

" Doubtless the angels do come to thee, for I am sure thou art pure of heart, and verily it is written, ' He shall give His angels charge.' "

Umlimo caught her hands and cried :

" Virginia, Virginia, I love thee ! "

Virginia drew her hands away and wept and said :

"I am thy father's slave—his slave. Have pity on me!"

Umlimo said :

"Canst thou not love me, Virginia?"

She said :

"Umlimo, I love not any man. I live only to do the bidding of my King. But I will serve thy father and thee ever, as a slave should. And so I do beseech thee betray me not!"

Umlimo said :

"I will never betray thee. Yet if I love thee, even so do I love the beautiful Barimo, whom others dread."

Virginia lifted her tear-laden grey eyes and looked upon him and said :

"Fear not, Umlimo. Often have I been told angels are messengers. Perchance are the Barimo sent to thee sometimes to comfort thee, or maybe with good tidings. Verily, something tells me one night thou shalt attain thy heart's desire by the solving of this mystery when the star-cross is in the sky. Where thou abidest thou mayest see my star-cross. When thou shalt see it sometimes remember the King of Love, whose humble servant is thy slave —Virginia."

Then Virginia turned away and hastened to resume her labour in the sun-heated field of millet. Also the sun shone fiercely upon Umlimo as he sat

upon the stone, but he heeded not. His head was bowed above his clasped hands upon his knees. And no bird sang.

III.

Now, about this time one went and told the chief, Ubukulu the Mighty :

“Behold, my father, the young chief Umlimo speaketh often with the fair slave Virginia.”

Then Ubukulu was troubled, for his heart was warm towards Umlimo, his Right-hand son, his youngest born, and the desire of his old age was to make Umlimo a great chief. So he bade the man leave him. Then he took counsel of his own heart in solitude what he would do, for he would not harm the little white slave-maid. After three nights Ubukulu bade some that were about him that they should seek and fetch his son Umlimo.

So Umlimo came and stood before his father, and his father said :

“Umlimo, my son, to-day I send ten oxen laden with skins—a small gift to my friend Sarili; and thereto shall I add some chains of gold, and the young slave-maiden Virginia, a gift to his daughter. What sayest thou? Wilt thou bear these gifts and look again upon the face of Zanyana, who shall be thy wife? Let thy heart speak, my son.”

Umlimo cast himself before his father, and cried out and said :

“ O my father, my father ! Suffer me to return to my flocks upon the hills. I am not fain to take a wife.”

Ubukulu said :

“ Harden not thine heart, Umlimo. Be not stubborn and perverse, O my son. It has been ever the custom of our chiefs to marry. I have chosen a beautiful maiden for thee, and her father will not send her empty handed. Also I will give unto thee the land upon the hills that is sloping to the south and east towards the sea, with sheep and herds to feed thereon ; men and slaves. I shall see thee a power in the land before I die.”

Then Umlimo grieved sore for the good words his father spake unto him, yet could he not subdue his heart to his father’s will, so great was his own desire, so little could he brook control. At last he said :

“ My father, I am thy son, how can I rebel against thee ? Yet suffer me, I pray thee, to return to my hills, if but for the space of a few moons, then if it be still thy will, I will return to thee again to do thy bidding.”

Ubukulu had learned wisdom and patience with age. He said :

“ Go in peace, my son.”

So Umlimo rose up and went his way. Yet because of the words his father had spoken, and because of

the promise he had given, he restrained himself and sought not to look again upon the face of Virginia.

It was noonday. As Umlimo passed by the house where Virginia lodged, the little child whom she had fondled stood at the door, and she followed Umlimo as he took his way through the pine groves and the great fields of sugar-cane, tall, waving, green, sunlit, against the blue sky. Greener yet the sugar birds darting hither and yon amongst the sweet stuff, clinging to the canes with eager kissing bills.

Suddenly he turned to look back, and so saw the little child, her bare brown feet upon the red path, her great brown eyes gazing up at him. He stopped, took her in his arms, and carried her back to the pine grove. There he gathered a handful of ixias, closed and brown now, but well he knew later they would unfold their white petals and cast upon the moonlit night the passionate abundance of their sweet perfume.

To the child he said :

“ Dost thou love Virginia ? ”

The child said :

“ Yes, I love Virginia with all my heart.”

Umlimo said to the child :

“ If thou lovest Virginia, thou wilt return and give to her these flowers that I give to thee.”

The child said :

“ I will return.”

So Umlimo set the child at the edge of the pine

grove and the child departed, and Umlimo set forth once more through the green sugar-cane towards the hills, heeding not the noonday sun. Its glowing heat was not more burning than his passionate heart, yet he chose his steps that he might not harm blooming thing or tiny life, so tender was his nature.

IV.

Now, when Umlimo was gone Ubukulu commanded to make ready against the morrow's sunrise, and sent one to tell Virginia that she must journey to the land of Sarili, and become the handmaid of his daughter, Zanyana the Beautiful.

Virginia sat at the door of Nozici's house, under the shade of a great palm tree, at work. As she worked she sang :

“Thou Shepherd that dost Israel keep,
Give ear in time of need.”

Presently came the servant of Ubukulu and told his message.

Virginia let fall her work and put her hands before her face, weeping sore. She feared to leave the home of Nozici lest another should be less kind.

As she sat weeping came the little child and called her name :

“Virginia ! Virginia !”

And Virginia looked and beheld the child, and the brown flowers in the little brown hand.

The child said :

"Take them, Virginia. I give them to thee because I love thee. The man with the blue crane feathers gave them to me."

So Virginia knew that Umlimo had meant the child to give to her the sweet night blossoms. To herself she said :

"Verily my sorrow is great, yet will I comfort me. One day I shall not doubt, but know how true are the words of the prophet—'Joy cometh in the morning.' Even so came of old those tidings of great joy to the shepherds—in the morning."

Her heart was tender for Umlimo, but her soul was above all earthly loves, pledged through bitter loss to her God—an alien God, as she was an alien. Ah, bethink ye, all ye that pass by, bethink ye, only an alien can know the aching loss of kindred and country—the loneliness of a stranger in a strange land.

So one day, in a year that knows no winter's cold, Virginia came to the country of Sarili, and so before his daughter, the princess Zanyana, her new mistress.

Zanyana stood under the tawny shade of a group of red gum trees, the full yellow sun of the afternoon falling athwart the life-warm red upon the grass, and upon the red earth path that led from hers to her father's house.

Zanyana—a queen by right of race and beauty. Tall, upright, her gold-brown tunic set off with rich red garlands of poinsettia leaves and fringe of Kaffir bloom. Bands of gold about her arms, her neck, her ankles; fillets of gold binding her hair, her soft brown eyes the gentler for her rich attire.

Virginia knelt before Zanyana. The hot yellow sun, atwixt the red leaves, made beautiful both the fair kneeling slave and the dark gentle princess. If the aureola adorned one a queen, even so it crowned the other a saint.

Zanyana said :

“ Behold the servant of Zanyana the Beautiful. My master, Ubukulu the Mighty, hath sent me hither, O princess.”

Zanyana said :

“ Arise, maiden. Fear not. Who brought thee ? ”

Virginia did not rise. She said :

“ The servants of my master, Ubukulu the Mighty, brought me here, O princess, by the grace of my God.”

Zanyana said :

“ Who is thy God ? ”

Virginia said :

“ My God is not thy God, O princess ; but suffer me, I do beseech thee, to worship Him silently in peace, and I will serve thee ever as a slave should.”

Zanyana said :

"Arise, Virginia. So, I have heard of thee, how good thou art ; thou shalt be safe here."

Then Virginia stood up and looked upon the face of Zanyana, and marvelled at her great beauty.

The princess leaned idly against the great trunk of a red gum tree, and tossed from hand to hand three crimson pomegranates. As she toyed wantonly with the brilliant fruit, her eyes cast down upon it, she said :

"Tell me, I pray thee, how fare the sons of Ubukulu the Mighty ?"

Virginia said :

"O princess, all of the house of Ubukulu the Mighty are well. Zembe the Heir grows powerful in princely strength. Zomfani the Eldest-born is ever kind to all. Umlimo the Young Chief has been with his father now two moons or more—he has but just set forth to return to the hill country."

Then Zanyana cast away the crimson pomegranates and crushed relentlessly the Kaffir bloom at her girdle. Stamping upon the red path she cried out :

"Umlimo hath departed from the woodlands ? Then Umlimo loves not Zanyana. I am forsaken of my lover. Forsaken, forsaken !" and Zanyana cast herself upon the ground.

Virginia drew nigh and touched Zanyana softly, and said :

"Take comfort, O my mistress. Lo, I come a gift to thee from the father of Umlimo. Thy lover seeks no other princess; he sends no spear-head hither. Ere many moons are gone doubtless he will return to claim his promised bride."

Then Virginia sat down upon the ground beside the princess and touched her jewelled arm with a cool white hand.

Zanyana ceased her moan. The sun dropped suddenly behind the red-leaved trees, and a cool grey darkness came upon the two maids.

One loving—one beloved.

One fair and free though bound.

One fair and bound though free.

v.

In the land of Sarili, Virginia dwelt in the house of Zanyana her mistress.

Virginia was not unhappy, for she was meek of heart, and her soul's gaze was ever fixed upon a King, not of any earthly country. Zanyana loved her well, and of her large gentleness spared the slave many humiliations: days and days the maidens passed together, in maiden pleasures and sweet companionship.

Zanyana could sing like any forest bird. The mocking-bird, at late sundown pouring forth his rich

chant, or at sunrise waking the world with joy, is not a sweeter singer than was this maid, who had learned of him and now excelled her master. The maid sang as the bird sang—strong and clear when her heart was glad in the new hope of the early dawn, tender and true when the sun had set, and the new day had not brought her heart's desire.

When the stars shone out in the deep blue sky would Virginia sing, gentle and low, the song of her own people :

“Thou Shepherd that dost Israel keep,
Give ear in time of need.”

One sunset, as the two maids sat together under the red gum trees, suddenly in the gathering dusk the woman Nozici approached, coming from out the forest towards them, the little child bound upon her back, her feet wounded with travel, her head bent, her hands weary.

Virginia ran eagerly towards her, and said :

“Nozici ! What tidings ? what cheer ?”

Nozici put the child upon the ground and said :

“O Virginia, I bring sad tidings ! Sorrow and heaviness have come upon me and mine, and, perchance, on thee. Ubukulu the Mighty is dead—is dead ! Zembe the Heir loves us not, neither loves he the Young Chief Umlimo, for he hath declared him outcast, and seized all. Oh woe—woe to me and

mine ! to the Young Chief Umlimo ! to those who love him ! ” Nozici wept aloud.

Then, in her own tongue, Virginia said :

“ God save us ! ” and she ran swiftly before Nozici towards Zanyana. Kneeling she kissed the hand of her mistress and said :

“ O Zanyana, my mistress, take courage ; trouble and loss and humility have come to thy lover. Umlimo is bereft of the good old man his father ; Zembe the Heir has seized upon the possessions that Ubukulu the Mighty gave to his Right-hand son, Umlimo, and Umlimo is declared outcast ! Poor Umlimo, alone upon the hills ! who shall pity him ? ”

Then Zanyana flung away the hand of her slave Virginia, rose to her feet, her eyes kindling, and cried out :

“ Stand off, slave ! dare not pity thy master. Umlimo is chief ! The hills, the flocks, the herds, the servants, the slaves, all that Ubukulu his father bequeathed to Umlimo are his for ever. Stand off ! ” And the dark maid triumphant went her way along the dusky path to the house of Sarili, her father.

As Zanyana drew nigh the house of Sarili he saw her, and called out :

“ Ho ! my daughter Zanyana, whence comest thou ? ”

Zanyana in a clear, rich voice replied and said :

“ I come with tidings of war. Listen to me, O my

father ! ” Then the dark maid stood before her father, royal heart to royal heart in the growing darkness, and told the tidings she had heard, and said :

“ My father, alas ! alas ! Ubukulu the Mighty is dead—is dead ! My betrothed, Umlimo, is far distant upon the hills. Zembe the Heir has seized all and declares Umlimo outcast. Suffer it not ! suffer it not ! O my father ! Give me a few braves and let me send them to the land of Ubukulu the Mighty, to claim and defend all that which he gave and promised to Umlimo, my betrothed.”

Sarili rocked himself to and fro and mourned and said :

“ Alas ! alas my friend Ubukulu ! ”

The maid stood patiently before him, for well she knew how loyally the two chiefs had loved one another. At last she said :

“ My father, shall not Ubukulu be obeyed, living or dead ? Shall not my lover, the favoured son of thy friend, have chancery to claim his own ? Shall the one only daughter of Sarili be mocked of Zembe and his people ? ”

The old chief was roused. He said :

“ Verily, no ! thou hast wisdom, girl. Call up the young men, thy kindred.”

Then Zanyana clapped her hands to make a great noise, and in a loud voice called out again and again :

“ Mnakwetu ! ”

Then all the young chiefs who were her brothers and cousins, and all the young men their friends, ran together towards her; but the women trembled, because the girl had dared to call out to the young chiefs, for the maidens of her country were taught to be ever modest and shy. Nevertheless, this time Zanyana was heedless—so much her love and passion conquered her.

She said :

“ Who will go for me to the land of Ubukulu the Mighty, and defend the property of my absent chief, Umlimo ? I am Zanyana, the one only daughter of Sarili, your chief. Have I no brothers who are princes, no friends who are brave ? ”

Then all the young men shouted aloud mightily :

“ O Zanyana ! O Zanyana ! We will protect Zanyana our sister, our princess ! Tsi, ha, ha, the weapons of Khàkhàbay ! ” Thus by the war cry of their tribe they pledged themselves.

Zanyana was comforted, and returned to her house to prepare for the morrow, when the braves should depart on their journey.

But ere she entered the door of her house, one came near her in the dark, and in a low, hissing voice said :

“ Harken, Zanyana the Beautiful. Umlimo, thy betrothed, loves thee not. Lo, he loves Virginia, thy slave.”

Zanyana said :

“ Liar ! ” and struck out at the voice in the dark. Nevertheless, the steel had entered her soul.

VI.

THE next day at sunrise the young chiefs who were brothers and cousins of Zanyana, with many young men who were their friends, set off to the country of Ubukulu, to defy Zembe, and to secure the portion of Umlimo.

Zanyana stood to see them set forth, and wished them well with a clear voice and gentle looks, and as they disappeared shouting, she shouted to them again with all her might the war cry :

“ Tsi, ha, ha, ha, ha, the weapons of Khàkhàbay ! ”

Virginia stood behind her mistress. When they were all gone Zanyana turned not, but remained looking up the leafy valley, her hands above her eyes to shade them from the hot, hot sun.

Then Virginia drew near her mistress and softly said :

“ Art thou content, my mistress ? ”

Zanyana turned roughly away and said :

“ What matter to thee ? I love thee no longer, Virginia. Thou wouldest steal the heart of my betrothed ! I have heard how he spake to thee and thou to him before thou was sent hither.”

Then Virginia knelt upon the ground and clasped her hands and wept and said :

“ O brave, beautiful Zanyana, my mistress, believe it not. I am thy faithful slave Virginia. I love not any man. All my heart is given to my King, my own gentle Shepherd.”

Zanyana said :

“ Where dwells thy King ? ”

Virginia said :

“ Far, far away, beyond these lands, where the pastures are ever green, and the still waters flow. Where the sun may not burn by day, nor harm come by night.”

Zanyana said :

“ Is it not true, that which I have said, Umlimo spake often to thee ? What said Umlimo ? ”

Virginia said :

“ Umlimo is a good shepherd. He spake to me of his flocks, and of his hills, and a little of the mountain Barimo ; and again, of the star-cross in the night sky, which he can see at times when he watches at night on the mountain slopes.”

Zanyana said :

“ What means your star-cross in the night sky ? Tell me, too, of the star-cross.”

Virginia said :

“ Beautiful mistress, since I have leave, I will tell thee what I know in my poor ignorance. A great

God, your ‘Qamata,’ once placed those brightest stars in the southern sky in form of a cross. Shepherds of old, many long, long moons back, watched for that cross upon the blue sea, and so sailed their ships that they came hither. On one fair, warm night so they came. They also served the God I own. On the very day my King of Love was born they reached this fairest land. In their tongue they called it the ‘Birthday of Christ,’ who is also my King, ‘Dia de Natal.’ In my tongue we say ‘Christmas Day.’ Oh, if I might I could tell you too how other shepherds, moons and moons before these, followed one single star, and following, found the King of Love, a tiny Babe, on Christmas morning.”

Virginia stopped, panting, her fair white face suffused with pink, her soft grey eyes upturned.

Zanyana, with folded arms, her leaf-crowned head thrown back, looked at her slave, heeding, yet seeming heedless. She said :

“ And these braves who came hither by sea, following the star-cross : why came they ? What sought they ? ”

Virginia dropped her eyes, her hands, her voice. She said :

“ Perchance they sought, like me, the better to serve their King. Verily, I have heard that—like me also—it profited them little. But I know, as they knew, that our King giveth to them that endure an everlasting

home, where we shall have, even as you believe, three times—thrice three times—the enjoyment of this life."

Zanyana stretched out her hands and sprang forward, passionately crying :

" Virginia, Virginia, I will love my shepherd even as you love yours."

So these two loving maids were happy with each other all the day, because each knew the sorrow of the other. The dark, beautiful princess grieved for her slave because she was weak and loved that which was beyond her reach ; and the fair slave-maid grieved for her mistress, because her power and her beauty availed her little to gain a love she hungered for.

At evening they sat together under the red-leaved trees, hand in hand, sheltered by the cool, still dark. The mocking-bird sang plaintively from the towering tree-top, but Zanyana answered him not. Softly she spoke to Virginia and said :

" Tell me, Virginia, about the Barimo that Umlimo loves. How knows he the Barimo ? Whence come they ? "

Virginia said :

" The Barimo whom Umlimo sees, come with the gathering clouds upon the mountain sides. Umlimo sees them sometimes at late evening, or in the night time, when the stars or the moon shine. He fears them not. Even as I fear not, but love the angels, for

in my country we believe the angels are servants of our God, even as we are."

Then Zanyana said :

" Knowest thou why my lover Umlimo is called 'the Dreamer' ? "

Virginia said :

" Perchance because he dreams his life away upon the hills, rather than take his part with other chiefs."

Zanyana said :

" It is many moons, thou knowest, since last I saw my chief; tell me, I pray thee, thou who hast seen him scaree a moon back, how may I know him now ? "

Virginia said :

" Umlimo is verily a chief, O my mistress. He is tall and lithe and strong; yet would'st thou know him best by his tender shepherd eyes."

Zanyana turned her head that she might dry unseen the tears she could not refrain. Then softly she said :

" Virginia, thou hast a true and loyal heart. Thou lovest well thy King, though he seeming careth little for thee. I will take pattern of thee. I will seek my shepherd chief, and win his own heart's love. I care not to be princess here in the land of my father if Umlimo loves me not. Wilt thou journey with me, Virginia ? It will be a long, weary way—yet short to

me because I seek my love. What for thee? Speak, Virginia, my sister, my friend."

Virginia was weeping. Yet her heart was strong, so small a thing she held her own desire. She said:

"Whithersoever thou wilt go, Zanyana my mistress, I will attend thee. I fear no pain. My God is ever my refuge and strength, and a very present help."

The darkness deepened, the song of the mockingbird was hushed, but a thousand insect voices made the night air murmurous with their ceaseless chant.

The two maids went quietly away within the house to rest. For rest comes to all nature, even to bruised and wounded hearts. And death, that long, best rest, is loved at last, when troublous life has taught its time-worn lesson—so old, yet oh, so hard, so long to learn.

VII.

Now Umlimo the Dreamer returned from the woodlands, the home of Ubukulu his father, and it was towards the beginning of the young leaf of the ever sun-warmed year. The nights were cold upon the mountains, and Umlimo wrapped himself well in his leopard-skin, and sought shelter under the lee of some of the great rocks that formed the lesser heights of his hill country. Always now he chose to look towards the south, where at full night he might see

the star cross above the far blue sea. Yet at evening he loved best to watch the mountain slopes, and the beautiful Barimo whom he feared not.

His heart was never now so glad as of old, in the hot noonday, or at sunrise when the golden orioles sang out with boundless joy from the yellow-wood trees in the valley. His heart failed him when he remembered the maid he scarcely knew nor loved, yet must wed ; or the maid he might not wed, yet knew and loved.

At times he recollect ed how patient was this maid who repined not her loss of home, of kin.

Again at times he strove to recall the beauty of that other maid, she whom he should wed, but it was in vain ; he could not picture her. Well he remembered she was beautiful, also that some had said she often looked at him.

Suchwise evenings and evenings passed away, and the lad, though he slept not, dreamed dreams.

Now, one evening, just after sunset, the clouds gathered thickly grey, the wind blew chill. Umlimo sat upon the ground, wind-dried, catching hard, white lights in the starlight. Umlimo sat upon the ground, wrapped in his leopard-skin, watching the mountains ; and as he watched, he beheld a figure of exceeding grace descending the mountain side, advancing toward him. As it drew nearer it stopped. Heavy clouds swept past and obscured the Barimo, but in the still

darkness Umlimo heard with mortal ears the song, as of the mocking-bird, yet words, rich and clear :

“ Umlimo, Umlimo, awake from thy dream,
 The sunrise is clearer,
 Thy Truelove is dearer,
 Thy life-work is nearer.
Than all thy night fancies may seem.”

All was still. The clouds passed, the stars shone out—but the vision had passed.

Umlimo sprang to his feet and ran towards the mountain, his eager eyes piercing both cloud and mist. But it was gone, and he, amazed, could take no thought to guess the mystery of the veiled Barimo, nor of the night bird's song, which had thrilled him with unspeakable delight ; familiar, yet so rapturously new.

Long and long the next night Umlimo watched again, but no vision came. The same stars shone out clear and white upon the wind-swept stones. The lad chafed, and chid himself because his soul rebelled. He could not care to watch, as once he did, for the star-cross, but could look only at the mountain side, longing for the night gathering clouds.

All the hot day as he tended his sheep he strove to recall the words of the bird's song, yet in vain. Only the familiar music smote ceaselessly upon his ears.

After three or four nights had passed by, Umlimo strove to forget. He turned his back upon the mountains. He courted sleep with closed eyes. He

sought to see the star-cross away above the sea in the south. He wrestled for oblivion.

Then suddenly upon the still night air came once again melodiously clear the refrain :

“Umlimo, Umlimo, awake from thy dream,
The sunrise is clearer,
Thy Truelove is dearer,
Thy life-work is nearer,
Than all thy night fauries may seem.”

Again the lad sprang to his feet, but even as the last words died away the thick, dark clouds, as before, obscured all. Dimly he could a little discern the receding veiled figure fleeing towards the mountain.

Umlimo sat down upon a great white stone. The words rang in his ears. This time he forgot them not, but pondered. That it was one of the Barimo he never doubted. He said :

“I will watch once more. If the Barimo shall sing to me again, surely I shall comprehend better. The sunrise I know, but ‘Truelove,’ my ‘Life-work,’ verily I know them not.” Yet in his heart of hearts Umlimo knew he deceived himself.

Many nights Umlimo watched, but the veiled Barimo came not; and when the mocking-bird sang he could hear no words. Then his heart sickened for very longing and loneliness.

At last one day he said :

“Truly I have wrought mine own undoing. I have

forsaken my father and my kindred to seek mine own joy, and joy hath fled from me since I sought only for it. I will return to the old chief, my father, in the woodlands. I will humble myself and ask counsel of my father, and do his bidding; so shall I at least appease my soul."

So Umlimo the Dreamer prepared for his journey.

To his few trusty servants he gave charge of his flocks. In his hand he took his staff. His leopard-skin he bound upon his back, and hung upon his beaded belt the treasures he most cared to keep. Ready at the last his spear, cut and polished with sharp stones, tried in the fire, such as his people knew so well to use in battle.

At sunrise he would set forth. Ah! yet he had to learn how mutable is man's most fixed desire. At sunrise! Ere the sun rose Umlimo sat upon a stone motionless, his spirit bowed with grief. The bitter grief that tortures the poor heart with keenest sorrow, the grief that, stern, relentless, cries "Too late! too late!"

Zomfani sat beside Umlimo. Zomfani, the faithful, tender elder brother, came in the night time, crying:

"Umlimo! Umlimo! woe! woe! I bring thee evil tidings. Alas! our father Ubukulu is dead, is dead! Zembe the Heir rules all, and thou, Umlimo, the little one, art declared outcast. Woe! woe to thee, Umlimo my brother!"

Then Umlimo lifted up his voice and wept aloud, and cried :

“ O my father, my father ! And I rebelled against thee, and obeyed thee not. O my father, my father shall I see thy face no more ? O woe is me ! ”

So the two brothers sat together mourning until daybreak. Then Zomfani said :

“ Whither shall we flee, Umlimo ? For Zembe will seek thee to destroy thee, that all the lands and the flocks may be his. Wilt thou seek the chief Sarili ? He was ever our father’s friend. Peradventure he will aid thee.”

But Umlimo said :

“ No, no ; not so, my brother. Ask me not to show myself before Sarili in my dishonour. I will hide me away in a secret cleft of the mountains, where no man shall find me, and do thou return to the woodlands. Zembe will never seek to harm thee.”

Zomfani said :

“ Umlimo, before I set forth to come to thee, I bestowed all that was mine own in a safe place that I might be free to come hither and abide with thee. In trouble I will not forsake thee. Thy mother was the daughter of a great chief—‘ He that was never afraid.’ When thou wast a tender, motherless babe I loved and cared for thee. Now thou hast neither father nor mother, but Zomfani, thy brother, will never desert thee.”

Then Umlimo wept afresh and said :

" Oh, that I had been less stubborn and heedless of my father's will. I have brought trouble, not only on myself, but also upon thee, O my brother."

And Umlimo cast himself down upon the ground, and would not be comforted, so heavy was his sorrow.

Zomfani left him all the day, for he said :

" Let him grieve and ease his heart."

But when the cool dark of night had come, Zomfani spake again to his brother and said :

" Umlimo my brother, hearken a little to me. Behold, I love thee well. Shall we not depart hence and seek aid from friends who are powerful, since we are powerless and alone ? "

Umlimo lifted himself up, and sat again upon the big stone, and looked out afar into the dark night. He said :

" Zomfani, thou art good; yet even thou who knowest hast said Umlimo's mother was a princess; her father, ' he that was never afraid.' Shall the son shame his parents ? Return thou, Zomfani, to Zembe and say, ' Thus saith Umlimo, son of Ubukulu the Mighty, single combat hath ever been the proof of valour of our people. Now, therefore, prove thyself, O Zembe. Come thou, or send hither any chief from among you that is my equal, that he and I may face one another and do battle hand to hand till one be fallen. And abide then, thou and I, by the result.

If I fall, then will I depart hence for evermore. If he fall, then shall he depart, and to me shall belong all that which my father, Ubukulu the Mighty, gave unto me, his Right-hand son.' Return, Zomfani, and take my message, and fear not for me."

Then Zomfani wept sore, and fell upon the neck of Umlimo, and cried out and said :

" O woe is me, my brother, my brother ! Would I might die for thee, my father's son."

Almost before the sound of the brothers' weeping had ceased, upon the night air, borne from afar in the solitude came the clear note of the mocking-bird. They listened ; nearer and nearer it came, and then in their own tongue came the words one had already learned to know :

" Umlimo, Umlimo, awake from thy dream ;
The sunrise is clearer,
Thy Truelove is dearer,
Thy life-work is nearer
Than all thy night fancies may seem."

Both young men rose up quickly. Zomfani would have dashed forward, but Umlimo held him. With beating heart, yet eager, gentle voice, he said : " Barimo ! "

Zomfani trembled with fear. Not so Umlimo. He turned himself about, and noted in the south the star-cross in the night sky. The comfort of

duty came to him, and he was steadfast. To himself he said :

" Sunrise I know. Truelove is not for me. Lifework at last is at hand."

To Zomfani he said :

" My brother, fear not. Have we not often heard the mocking-bird hitherto ? Arise, go—take my message to Zembe. If I have sent our dear father in sorrow to his death, at least I will not dishonour him. Fear not for me, O dearest brother. Peace be between us for evermore."

Then Zomfani questioned no more, though much he marvelled at the lad his brother, and went his way out into the night.

Long Umlimo stood and gazed at the star-cross, and bethought him of the gentle slave-maid and her words about it: " Doubtless to be a guide to those who sought." A little he thought upon that other maid. Next he remembered how she, that royal maid, and all that a chief might prize, was gone from him, lost by his own waywardness, because he followed not the counsel of the father who loved him well, but sought perversely his own will.

He sat upon a stone, and bowed his head upon his knees. Aloud in the darkness he cried out and said :

" I am undone, undone ! Poor, bereft, forsaken there is no one who cares. Yet do I deserve

my sorrow. I have sinned. O my father, my father!"

It was yet early night. The burden of his heart fell upon the still air. Then—close, clear, sweet—again the song—

"Thy Truelove is dearer,
Thy Truelove is dearer."

Umlimo arose. Not far from him stood the veiled Barimo. The starlight caught some glittering, fickle sheen of gold beneath the veil. The soft, dark eyes were steadfast.

Umlimo said :

"Beautiful, most beautiful upon the mountain,
who art thou ?"

Yet more softly this time came the song—

"Thy Truelove is dearer,
Thy Truelove is dearer."

Umlimo thrilled to the innermost secret of his soul—his heart beating with rapturous joy hitherto unknown. He opened wide his arms, and to his warm embrace like a panting bird came the maid ; for it was a maid, and no Barimo.

With passionate, quivering voice Umlimo cried :

"Who art thou, love ?"

She tore away the veil, and pressed her face to his—her sweet, mortal breath upon his cheek, the fragrance of woodflowers amongst her hair, the magic

of triumphant love in her touch, her voice, her breath. She said :

“ I am thy Truelove—she who has longed for thee, sorrowed for thee, toiled for thee ; she who loves thee beyond joy or pain, loss or gain ; she who is thy pledged wife—Zanyana. Love me a little, O Umlimo ! Love me a little, my beloved.”

VIII.

It was not strange to Umlimo that all at once this maid had won from him love’s uttermost surrender. If his soul had been stirred before, it was conquered now. And, after great sorrow and despair, who shall measure the perfect paradise of attained desire ?

Zanyana, the maid, knew only the sheltering, sufficient joy of her lover’s tender embrace—banished all recollection of toil, fatigue, distress.

Umlimo, the man, questioned his heart, amazed that such supreme delight should follow on his own unworthiness.

True love—true love ! It feeds upon that patient trust, through loss, that comes to those who lose themselves for love of one. Beauty, nor wealth, nor power, nor craft may win this prize. Yet doth it come unasked to many a humble soul.

Umlimo had sought only for himself — had wrapped himself in one self-sought ideal. Sorrow and

loss had torn the cloud and glamour from his idol, and dashed the idol to the ground ; yet in his loss he found his heart's desire.

Umlimo said :

“ How camest thou hither, Zanyana ? ”

She said :

“ Journeying to seek thee, Umlimo, and Virginia the slave came with me. We have dwelt ever together.”

Umlimo said :

“ Virginia ! ”

Zanyana said :

“ The maid is very gentle. I love her much, even as a sister.”

Umlimo said :

“ Virginia, I remember, loves only the star-cross in the night sky, and her far-off King.”

Zanyana said :

“ A chief once loved only a dream, a shadow—Barimo.”

Umlimo said :

“ Truly, the dream vanished, the shadow faded, but the dear love is his for ever. Yet hearken to me, Zanyana my beloved. Verily, thou knowest me not ; behold, I am no longer that chief to whom thou wast pledged. I am but a poor shepherd without flocks.”

Then Umlimo would have related to Zanyana all his heavy tidings, but she prevented him, telling him with tenderness she cared only for his love. At last

he told her how he had vowed himself to single combat with one from Zembe.

Much he marvelled that the maid lightly laughed and said :

“ Verily, thou shalt be a great chief, my Shepherd. He who is true and valiant may suffer, yet shall he conquer.”

Then the maid left him, nor could he persuade her to disclose to him the secret of her hiding. Only she promised him she would return.

Yet after the next sunset, when the maid came not, Umlimo could endure no longer, but sought hither and yon, yet found her not.

At last, coming upon some great rocks that overhung a deep ravine, he discovered, well-hidden between great stones, a small hut. Within were signs whereby he knew someone had lately sheltered there. Now it was deserted ; only in one corner lay the dark veil he had seen last covering the form of his beloved.

So Umlimo knew that his bird had flown. Then he bethought him of her parting words—“ He who is true and valiant.” He looked up at the dark sky, and beheld again the star-cross, clear and bright before him. He said :

“ I, too, will journey towards it, away from these mountains I have ever loved. Perchance I, too, even as those other shepherds so long ago, I too may seek and find.”

So Umlimo took again his staff and spear and set forth.

Taught by the love of two fair maids—the one who loved him less than he loved her—the other who loved him better than he loved himself.

IX.

WHEN the night was far spent, Umlimo slept a while, yet awoke at early dawn. He stood a little to gaze upon the land, refreshed, like him, with the cool night's repose ; encouraged, like him, with fresh gold of sunrise.

The mountains rose behind him, gilded with the new day's new light. Before him a level plain. To the west a deep valley, thick with corn, verdant with rich green of towering trees and sloping pastures, redolent of flowers, jubilant with the song of dawn's delight sung by ten thousand birds. To the east and south the blue, blue sea, sparkling with the untarnished gems of earliest sunlight. Betwixt this and him fields of sugar-cane. Tender, feathery green bamboo, wind-tossed against the sky, tranquil protecting palms and the woodlands of his childhood's home.

As he gazed, Umlimo noted, far in the distance of the valley, what seemed a cloud. Again he looked, and presently beheld without question a moving mass of people—a glittering sheen of spears ; and upon his

ears, borne on the wings of the morning, smote a cry of triumph :

“ Umlimo, Umlimo the Shepherd Chief ! ”

And from the east another cloud, other spears catching the new sunlight, other shouting :

“ Zembe the Heir, Zembe our Chief ! ”

Umlimo transfixed, yet not abashed, stood alone upon the higher ground, his head thrown back, his eyes aglow. In one hand his shepherd’s staff, in the other his well-wrought spear. The mountain mists behind him. The young sunlight on his face.

Up the valley closer, closer caine the multitude, came and stayed.

From out the army on the west moved a single chief. From out the army on the east, a chief, advancing both to meet him. But ere either drew nigh, came yet another swiftly. And as Umlimo looked, behold, it was this last, Zomfani, who reached him first.

Panting, Zomfani said :

“ Umlimo my brother, lo, they come ! A chief from Zembe to do battle with thee ; a chief from Sarili with good tidings. Fail not, O my brother, fail not ! ”

Umlimo, looking at his brother and perceiving his anxious solicitude, forgot himself in the other’s distress. He said :

“ Content ye, my brother. I have much to gain—little to lose. I fear no man.”

Then came the chief from Zembe and cried :

“ Hear, O Umlimo the Dreamer ! Behold, my chief, Zembe the Heir of Ubukulu the Mighty, hath sent me, saying, ‘ I defy thee ! I will give thy body to the wild dogs of the plains. Thy bones shall whiten in to-morrow’s sun, and not a stone shall cover them. Now, therefore, defend thyself.’ ”

Umlimo laughed aloud, and said :

“ Stand thou on one side whilst I speak with this other.”

Then he who came from the valley approached and said :

“ Hail, Umlimo, the Shepherd Chief, son of Ubukulu the Mighty ! Behold, thus saith my father Sarili : ‘ Verily I know thee well, Umlimo. Thy father Ubukulu was my lifelong friend. A covenant was between us twain, whereby I promised him my one only daughter, Zanyana, that she should be thy wife. Behold, I bring the princess and they who serve her. Moreover, in my train this day also are those who own thee for their chief, even as they were taught and bidden by Ubukulu the Mighty before he died.’ How wilt thou claim thy bride, O Umlimo ? ”

Umlimo stepped back a pace or two. His manhood’s power came upon him ; proudly he gave to Zomfani his spear, his leopard skin, took in his right hand his shepherd’s staff and said :

“ O son of Sarili, hear me ! With my shepherd’s

staff will I win my bride—will I win from the usurper mine own inheritance.”

Then the two chiefs combatant made ready. He of Zembe’s camp looked well at his spear and walked apart a little space with confident mien ; but Umlimo moved not, nor limb nor eye.

The sun, now in full power of day, shone hot between the two.

Amongst the throng in the west two maids stood breathless, one with dark, eager eyes and panting breast, one with clasped white, prayerful hands.

Swiftly came the young warrior running towards his foe, his long bright spear poised as he ran, then hurled with matchless aim at the heart of Umlimo.

The Shepherd Chief quailed not, nor took his steadfast gaze from off the approaching enemy. Ere the spear touched him, he stepped aside to let it pass, and it hurt him not. Then with a great bound he reached his foe, and with his staff he felled him to the ground.

Up from the valley arose a great shout.

“Umlimo ! Umlimo is victor! Tsi ha ha ha ha the weapons of Khàkhàbay !” and thousands ran clamouring to the young Shepherd Chief. He stood silent above his fallen foe, still in his hand his shepherd’s staff.

So the people of Sarili took Umlimo and brought him before Sarili, the great chief, who awaited with many followers in the valley.

At her father's side stood Zanyana. Perhaps less imperious than of old, but beautiful as the dawn; her up-looking eyes love-lit, her head a little bowed, and behind her, kneeling with the other maids, Virginia, her white hands folded above the white garment that covered her form, her sea-grey eyes gazing afar.

Umlimo knelt before Sarili.

Sarili said :

“ Arise, my son; thou art worthy of thy fathers. Thou art no longer the Dreamer, but Umlimo the Shepherd Chief. Behold, thou hast a goodly following; see all these who have chosen to leave Zembe and dwell with thee.”

Then Sarili took his daughter by the hand, and stepping forth towards Umlimo, he placed her hand in his and said :

“ Behold, I give to thee my dearest treasure, my one only daughter. Cherish her, for she hath toiled for thee, even as thou hast fought for her.”

Umlimo took reverently the hand of the maid, and said :

“ O Sarili, my father, I have erred much, lost much, suffered much, yet am I this day requited with more than I am worthy to receive. Nevertheless, I pray thee fear not for thy daughter, for she is mine own truelove. I promise thee she shall be content.”

Then Umlimo led Zanyana away, and all her maids

and all they who were Umlimo's people, followed shouting :

“ Umlimo, Umlimo the Shepherd Chief ! ”

* * * * *

So it came at last to these two to win their heart's desire, after sorrow and toil and loss and weariness. Happy Umlimo ! Happy Zanyana ! Life holds but one such perfect recompense. Youth heeds no future fear. The sun, with zenith fervour, shone to bless their troth. Who shall estimate the fulness of their joy ?

At sunset Zanyana, wearied a little, reposed upon a grassy mound, thick-grown with flowers. Softly to her came Virginia and knelt beside her mistress.

She said :

“ My mistress ! ”

Zanyana said :

“ Speak, Virginia ; what wouldest thou ? ”

Virginia said :

“ Art thou happy, my mistress ? ”

Zanyana said :

“ O Virginia, my heart is glad beyond the power of tongue to tell. Yet I would thou, too, wert happy. Can I do aught for thee, my sister, my friend ? ”

Virginia said :

“ Even so, my beautiful mistress. I have heard that some of Zenbe's people dwell upon the yellow sands by the sea. Suffer me, I pray thee, to return

and dwell with them. Peradventure a ship may arrive thither again one day, and happen I may so return to mine own land once more."

Zanyana gazed sadly upon the bending golden head close at her side. She said :

"Would'st thou leave me then, Virginia?"

Virginia said :

"Zanyana, my mistress, is for ever happy now. Her Shepherd Chief will cherish her. As for me, I am but a poor slave—an exile. If I have done aught whereby I have found favour in thine eyes, O my mistress, suffer me to return, if it may be, to mine own land, where the people know and worship my King of Love."

So Zanyana gave consent, for she could not gainsay aught the slave-maid had said, seeing how hitherto she had asked never any grace for herself, but had ever waited on the eyes of her mistress to serve her.

So these two maids embraced one another and parted weeping, the one whose love by patient quest had gained her heart's desire, the other whose patient quest and love had gained only a saint's reward.

Now, in the early dawn, Umlimo, the Shepherd Chief, and his bride Zanyana the beautiful, Zomfani the elder brother, and all they of Ubukulu's people who had chosen his Right-hand son Umlimo to be their chief, arose and went their way up and away into the

hill country, where the pastures of the great Drakenberg Mountains slope to the south and east.

There they builded themselves houses, tilled the land, and became a great people.

X.

VIRGINIA the slave returned to the seaside, and dwelt with Zembe's people upon the yellow sands.

Long days and days she watched, looking out upon the waves tossing white as they dashed themselves upon the sand, looking and longing for the sight of a white sail upon the sea.

One day, when even before sunrise it was warm, Virginia, watching, felt her heart throb with a great joy. Her ship had come at last; had come sailing in the night; now the daylight showed her as she lay, the breakers past, close in to shore.

Virginia ran swiftly along the sands, nearer, nearer. Then listened, for her ears had caught the sound of voices, and as she listened, lo, in her own tongue she heard singing:

“ And all the souls on earth shall sing
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;
And all the souls on earth shall sing
On Christmas Day in the morning.”

Then Virginia knew that these had come to this fair land, even as of old others had come upon the day they called “ Dia de Natal.”

XI.

MOONS and moons after Umlimo had reached in triumph his own mountain land a message came to him.

One evening, after sunset, a stranger walked towards him as he lingered on the hillside, and said :

“ Behold, O chief, the white maid Virginia hath left her home upon the sea sands, and sailed away in a ship with some who knew to speak her tongue. Ere she left, she prayed me that I would bring this to thee, saying, ‘ He will remember the star-cross.’ ”

Then the stranger gave into Umlimo’s hand, in the gathering dark, a bunch of white ixias, fastened and bound with a bit of blue ribbon, that once had held the silver cross about Virginia’s neck.

Then the man went his way.

* * * *

Umlimo stood long in the darkness, watching till in the south he could see the star-cross in the night sky.

The ixias in his hand burdened the air with their sweet subtle perfume.

* * * *

If a pain smote upon Umlimo’s heart, it was for the fair slave who had said to him : “ Shepherds have ever sought more for others than for themselves,” and who had faithfully and only loved her Shepherd King.



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